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ABSTRACT

The papers in this yearbook focus on the strategies, practices, and research related to elementary reading, secondary reading, adult reading, literature, philosophy of reading, psychology of reading, affective issues, administration, supervision, research, teacher training, assessment that affect reading and reading instruction. Papers in the book are: "National Standards Movement: Inspiration or Norm?" (Thomas Cloer, Jr.); "The Standards Project for English Language Arts: A Diary, a Warning, an Update" (Lawrence G. Erickson); "The Call to Forum--a Discussion of Ralph Fletcher's 'Walking Trees'" (Samuel S. Myers); "Elementary School Adopts Two Reading Professors: Lessons from a Five Year Partnership" (Lynn C. Smith and Lawrence G. Erickson); "Preservice Teachers' Literacy Dispositions" (Lynn D. Miller and others); "Spur Revisited: Five Years after a State-Funded Reading Improvement Project, What Pieces Remain?" (Glenda Lofton and Martha Head); "Is Resistance Empowerment? Using Critical Literacy with Teachers" (James R. King and others); "Vocabulary Development as Knowledge of Word" (Tom Estes); "Pieces of the Puzzle: Putting Reading and Writing Together" (Jo Ann F. Bass and others); "Literature Study Groups in Reading Education" (Janet A. Miller); "Readin' Bout Huntin' an Fishin' in Appalachian Secondary Schools" (Thomas Cloer, Jr. and Amy D. McMahan); "Students' Perceptions of High School Stratification and Opportunities" (Richard J. Telfer and others); "Assessing Basic Skills in Workplace Literacy Programs" (Eunice N. Askov and Brett Bixler); "Alternative Assessment: Use of Portfolio Assessment in a Workplace Literacy Program" (Barbara H. Van Horn and Regina A. Guaraldi); "Readability and the Newbery Award Winners: How Do They Compare? (Nancy Clements and others); "Resources for Making Educational Decisions Regarding the Selection of Multicultural Materials. A Ready Resource of References Taken from Infotract, 1993" (Kathleen Evans and others); and Problems Court: Now We've Decided To Stop Blaming the Victims for Failure in Reading, How Must We Change Our Conception of Remedial Reading?" (Wayne Otto and others). (RS)

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From The Editors

Volume XIV of the American Reading Forum Yearbook contains papers which have been recommended by the Editorial Advisory Board from those submitted by authors who presented at the 1993 Annual Conference on Sanibel Island, Florida. Papers and reactions from general sessions, problems courts, and forums have been arranged to represent the variety of exciting ideas explored during the conference.

Past volumes of the American Reading Forum Yearbook addressed issues which were related to past, present, and future literacy concerns. With the theme, READING: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER, papers in this volume focus on strategies, practices, theory, or research related to elementary reading, secondary reading, adult reading, literature, philosophy of reading, psychology of reading, affective issues, administration, supervision, research, teacher training, assessment, as well as other issues, which may affect reading and reading instruction.

American Reading Forum

Volume XIV, 1994

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National Standards Movement: Inspiration or Norm?

Thomas Cloer, Jr.

Alan Farstrup, Executive Director of the International Reading Association, gave an interesting keynote address on the new Standards Project for English and Language Arts at the last annual meeting of the American Reading Forum. This project was a collaborative effort of the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois, the International Reading Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English. The project was initially funded by the U. S. Department of Education, but the flow from the government spigot has since ceased completely. However, plans are underway to continue and complete the project, the lack of financial flow from the federal faucet notwithstanding.

The purpose of this project, according to Farstrup, is to develop language arts standards, concerning what students should know and be able to do in the 21st century. The project is to draw on the best current theory, research, and practice in the learning and teaching of language arts.

Farstrup made it very clear that the project was about content, not assessment. Content ostensibly refers to what all students should know and be able to do. The project would develop challenging learning goals for all students in reading, writing, and oral language. The reading would involve making sense of texts (literature, film, media, illustrations, etc.). The writing involves composing text (print, technical displays, films, etc.). Oral language will focus on listening, speaking, and performance.

Farstrup continued by putting emphasis on high standards for all. "All students should be subjected to the same high standards", he declared. It was at this very point in the presentation that my darn Walter Mitty daydreams started again. Attention Deficit Disorder, my wife thinks. Maybe.

Members of the Forum blinked their eyes and smiled courteously as Alan explained how the project would promote equality of educational opportunity and higher academic achievement for all students. (H-m-m, sounds good). The project would honor diversity in class, gender, language, and ethnicity by developing standards that were so flexible that curriculum planners, administrators, and educational policy makers would simply adapt them to the individual requirements of the different communities throughout America. This was when the dang daydreams kicked in.

I suddenly found myself a distinguished member of the National Board for Standards in English Language Arts. I looked around and felt the pressure of being in the company of such distinguished people in my field. I opened my sugar-free certs and started sucking; no time to have nervous breath. I saw Richard Anderson from the University of Illinois and Kathy Au from Hawaii. Shirley Brice Heath and then Senator Simon with a hugh red bow-tie sat immediately to my right. I felt a little more nervous than usual. These were really distinguished people; I popped some more certs.

As I glanced around the room, I swallowed hard and looked for the water pitchers. Susan Glazer, president-elect of IRA, and Donna Alvermann from the National Reading Research Center smiled politely as my eyes met theirs.

"Dr. Cloer, we're delighted you have accepted our invitation to serve in this very important capacity," the chair, Janet Emig, said in her most urbane professorial voice. "Thank you! I'm anxious to write standards," I responded with false bravado.

"Now!" Professor Emig said in a manner that reminded me of Bill Buckley on Firing Line. "As most of you know, board members are to review and critique the standards, not write them, as they are developed by the task forces representing early school, middle school, and high school. So, I think it only appropriate that each of us individually contribute at least one insight of discernible profundity."

My heart pumped faster; my palms were perspiring. "We'll start with Richard Anderson," she said. "Anyone capable of helping America to quickly become a nation of readers will surely prove a veritable asset in this endeavor." She and Richard smiled and both looked at me.

At this point, something peculiar happened that is not atypical for me. I started daydreaming in my daydream. Now get the picture.

Here I am daydreaming about being on the national Board for Standards in English Language Arts. As the other Board members get their turns to impress the chair; Professor Emig, I daydream (in my daydream) about Bill Blanton's presentation at the 1993 American Reading Forum. Bill Blanton and I in this inner daydream are practicing Tai Chi, an ancient Chinese exercise emphasizing meditation, relaxation, and balance. Bill had used Tai Chi as a metaphor for multiple pathways to literacy during his presentation at ARF.

"There are many paths to the mountain peak my son," Bill says as his arms and legs work in circular bicycle-like motion and he stares glassy-eyed into the distance. "You can get to the mountain," he says in his Appalachian State philosophical voice. "But you must pick your own path, my son."

I tried futilely to keep my leg cocked as a dog at a fire hydrant. "I can't do this Bill!! Why should I keep trying to do this when I am so obviously inept?" I asked. "Why?" he scowled. "You, a respected mountain-bred boy ask me why? Listen, Elmo, because I'm going to say it only once." Others doing Tai Chi in front of the fountains (you always need fountains) stopped and listened to the philosopher. "Anything really genuinely worth doing," he said as if talking to the distant clouds, "is worth doing poorly when we can't do any better. This, my son, includes art, music, dance, physical activity, Tai Chi and—yes—language arts."

I am suddenly jolted back to my first tier of daydreaming and my placement on the Standards Board by the words language arts.

As we continued around the room at the Standards Project, several insights of discernible profundity were delivered by other members of the National Board. One member stated that the standards should focus on content or what all students should know and be able to do. The words "all should know and be able to do" subtracted from the minuscule confidence I had developed in relation to the project. How could this possibly be in synch with "Anything genuinely worth doing is worth doing poorly when one can't do any better?"

As I clear my head entirely and stop all my daydreaming by listening to Alan Falstrup continue his presentation at ARF, the uncertainties about the project intensify. I hear him say unequivocally that all students should be subject to the same high standards. The information about appreciating and valuing diversity during the implementation of the standards did not allay my concerns that a national curriculum assessed by a national test was a genuine possibility. I thought I was following Farstrup well as he talked about all the professional resources being made available to all (yeah - right) when I fell off the wagon again and lost out to the temptation to daydream.

A member of the Management Team for the standards project was ranting on about how communities would develop their own standards when another *board member voiced the old familiar criticism that these new standards would become minimal standards. The rebuttal of that criticism seemed bizarre and contradictory in relation to communities developing their own standards. The response was, "The same high standards would apply to all students."*

"Well, just how do you assess your effectiveness with these new high standards?" I asked with a somewhat quivering rattle in my voice. Suddenly, all eyes were on me. "Dr. Clure!" "Cloer," I replied nervously but courteously to the board member who obviously was unfamiliar with me and annoyed by my lack of discernible profundity. "We are not involved with assessment. This is about content, not assessment."

"Yes - but - but," I stammered. "Yes go ahead - please!" the annoyed board member pleaded. "If you say all students should know these things and be able to do them, will you all also agree that anything genuinely worth doing is worth doing poorly when one can't do any better?"

The entire board stared penetratingly and enigmatically at me. One little woman closed her eyes and shook her head as if she had a headache. My chance at discernible profundity had come and gone.

I listened and watched intently as Alan Farstrup ended his session with a tachistoscopic presentation of overheads depicting what the board saw as integrated language use. This reading, writing, and oral language paradigm challenged me to be creative and write at least one standard before I left Sanibel Island. So while the rest of the Forum members frolicked on the beach and/or involved themselves with the Spirit of the Times, I tried to write one standard that met all the laudable criteria, and addressed all the concerns brought forth to date.

As my wife and I left Sanibel and headed north on I-75, I looked anxiously around in the car for my attache case, knowing my writing was inside of it. I found it and gleamed with pride as I read my standard, my only insight of discernible profundity meeting all the criteria, addressing all the concerns, and focusing on integrated language use. The standard takes fully into account planning for the future, pursuit and use of information, thriving in a multi-lingual environment, and moving into the world of work. I wrote this standard, lit this torch, - yes - provided this inspiration only after addressing all the criteria and concerns provided by the National Standards Project. My standard: Communication will occur through symbols (sometimes poorly).

The Standards Project for English Language Arts
A Diary, A Warning, An Update

Lawrence G. Erickson

MAY 15, 1993. John Logan is excited. He sends me a videotape of the tele-conference he organized along with Al Farstrup, Janet Emig, and David Pearson. The tape shows John, Janet, David, and some teachers discussing the effort to develop national language standards. The panel discusses, debates, explains, takes questions from across the nation, and we hear that standards will be written by July, 1994.

DECEMBER 12, 1993. It's 8:15 a.m. and Al Farstrup, Executive Director of the International Reading Association, is the keynote speaker at this Sunday morning general session at the ARF conference. Speaking to a group of about 50 in the Sundial room, he tells how the standards project is an attempt to describe what students should know and be able to do so as to live literate lives in the 21st century. As one of the project leaders he tells how this three-year collaborative effort by the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois, the International Reading Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English is funded by the U. S. Department of Education with additional resources from IRA, NCTE, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Al explains the project and passes out literature that stresses how the process of setting standards for the learning and teaching of English language arts will promote both equality of educational opportunity and higher educational achievement for all students. In order to achieve this purpose, Al says that this project intends to develop standards that differ from past reform efforts in ambition, scope, and grounding. It will draw on the best theory, research, and practice in English language arts and it will honor diversity in class, gender, ethnicity, and language. The standards will be flexible so that teachers, administrators, educational policy makers, curriculum planners, parents, and all others interested in promoting literacy, can adapt them to fit their local communities. Al also stresses that the standards will also be used to encourage local schools, communities, and the nation to provide the resources necessary for students and teachers to meet them. He says that the time line for these standards is to have them written by July of 1994, reviewed and revised for about a year and published in 1995.

In addition to showing a sample standard, Al explains how the project is governed by a 25 member national board made up of language arts professionals, business leaders, authors, elected public officials, and representatives of the general public. Ex-officio board members from major national language research centers and from the executive boards of IRA and NCTE are also involved. He tells us that three task forces, one each for grades K-4, 5-8, and 9-12, with eight members each, are preparing the actual standards. The three groups are meeting twice yearly in week-long sessions to draft and revise documents. In order to meet the 1995 publication date he tells how a six-member management team, consisting of the chair of the national board, three members representing the Center for the Study of Reading, IRA, and NCTE, and two individuals who will be presidents of IRA and NCTE in 1995, is coordinating the day-to-day project activities. Jean Osborn, at the Center for the Study of Reading (CSR) at the University of Illinois is the official project coordinator.

Al wraps up his presentation, tells us that the project directors are looking for input and some grass-roots involvement and distributes brochures describing the project and forms with names and addresses of people to contact at IRA, NCTE, and CSR. As the sessions ends at 9:15 a.m. ARF conferees gather to talk with Al, others mingle near the coffee pot in the hallway outside the Sundial room, and several of us wander outside by the pool. Although there is a cool breeze off the Gulf, the sun feels good so I go back to my room, and after eating some cereal and a banana I change into my swim suit and return to the main building where I buy Sunday's thick *Miami Herald*.

DECEMBER 12, 1993. It's 10:10 a.m., pool-side. A few tanning. Nobody's swimming. The Sunday *Miami Herald* on my lap offers some protection from the breeze. I am looking at Al Farstrup's handouts, and jotting some ideas on a pad of Sundial notepaper. I remember yearbook editor, Kaybeth Camperell, saying we need more reaction papers. I recall Gary Moorman's comment that Al's metaphors bothered him. I'm bothered by something too. Maybe I'll write a reaction paper for the yearbook on The Standards Project for English Language Arts that Al Farstrup just presented.

I think about Al's words. National standards are a "coherent vision of what it means to be literate". He says, "We must do it or others will do it for [to] us." He says, "We must do it because there are too many inequities in schooling. Every student deserves a chance, an opportunity to become literate." The standards will be "models for local schools to use and writing local standards will be voluntary."

There is a definite sound of serious urgency in Al's voice. He spends most of his time telling **how** IRA and NCTE are working together [and this is no easy accomplishment] to do this in only two years. He points out how other groups, like the mathematics people, took eight years. He shares drafts of frameworks and models that show **how** the committees' products will be formatted:

The Standard
An Elaboration
A Vignette
An Interpretation and
Commentary

Al shares a sample of a draft of one standard, no hard copy, just a visual on the overhead. He gives us a form where we can give him feedback and even get involved by sharing our ideas, references, issues, and addresses/e-mail/fax, etc.

Overall, he does a fine job of explaining what is going on. I make a special note of project director Jean Osborn's phone number in Champaign. I fantasize calling her when I return to Illinois. Do I really want to get involved? Is it personal? Maybe I'm jealous about not being a part of this project. Is it professional? Am I peeved because the project sounds like the old R&D model where the experts make a product that is scientifically sound? Is it me? Is my concern based on fear? Do national language arts standards mean national literacy curriculum? Will it "...at once promote an equality of educational opportunity and higher academic achievement for all students."[????]

As I jot away sketching out my thoughts and feelings, a young mother balances her infant in a car seat on a lounge close to the pool edge and my stomach flips. I imagine the weight tipping the baby into the pool. This concern stops my jotting about Al's presentation and I decide to read the Sunday *Miami Herald*.

Miami is fighting back. Articles and editorials telling how it is not the dangerous place portrayed on network TV or in other papers. Lots of ads for Christmas shopping fall out on the pool deck and the "last to be printed" sports section looks inviting. I wade into the four pounds of newsprint thinking about language standards, babies falling into the pool, and I come to section M titled viewpoints.

I see a picture of Toni Morrison receiving the Nobel Prize for literature from the Swedish King imbedded in an excerpt of her acceptance speech subtitled *In Language Lies Human Liberation*. I read on. I think about national language standards. Over the top of the paper I see the mother move the baby away from the pool. I recall my delight and respect in reading Morrison's book *Jazz*. I wonder what she might say about professors and teachers writing language standards. So I read on. Suddenly, her messages leap and jump from the paper. I can hardly read carefully. It's an amazing experience. Intending to relax and reflect and enjoy a Sunday paper in the sun beside the pool, instead I am now listening as a powerful, poetic writer warns me about language standards!

My mind swirls. It's uncanny. Is she talking to me in her powerful voice about my own concerns with national language standards, or is it too much sun and too little breakfast? I read on.

> [Morrison] thinks of language partly as a system, partly as a living thing over which one has control, but mostly as agency—as an act with consequences. [She] thinks of language as susceptible to death, erasure; certainly imperiled and salvageable only by effort of the will. p. 5M.

Her concern [and mine] is not with the form or the content of language, but with how language is used. I think of standards as agency, as language acts with consequences. What consequences? Morrison says:

> ...a dead language is not only one no longer spoken or written, it is unyielding language content to admire its own paralysis. Like statist language, censored and uncensoring. Ruthless in its policing duties, it has not desire or purpose other than maintaining the free range of its own narcotic narcissism, its own exclusivity and dominance. p. 5M.

It is the policing duties function of language that hit me the hardest. Although Al had said the application and use of standards were to be voluntary, I think about what stops them from becoming licenses for the language police. Armed with these standards we could have what Morrison calls "the language of surveillance disguised as research." And "underneath the eloquence, the glamour, the scholarly associations,... the heart of such language is languishing, or perhaps not beating.... " Just like when I read her book *Jazz* I stop, reread, savor her rich yet obscure metaphors. Am I misinterpreting her? Do her words really apply to Al's presentation? I read on:

> The conventional wisdom of the Tower of Babel story is that the collapse was a misfortune. That it was the distraction, or the weight of many languages that precipitated the tower's failed architecture. That one monolithic language would have expedited the building and heaven would be reached. Whose heaven,...and what kind? Perhaps the achievement of Paradise was premature, a little hasty if no one could take the time to understand other languages, other views, other narratives. Had they, the heaven they imagined might have been found at their feet. Complicated, demanding yes, but a view of heaven as life; not heaven as post life. p. 5M.

The Bible reference jolts me. The language standards project is not unlike a gathering of language bishops intent on writing a monolithic catechism of standards. What for? Protection? Preservation? Surveillance? Equality? Will the standards be used to spy on schools and on teachers in an attempt to ensure equality in language learning? Is language learning equality possible? The underlying message is that surveillance standards will yield opportunities for children to reach their full literacy potential. But will it? Perhaps the ancient concern of too many languages is still the concern today. The conventional wisdom in the Tower of Babel story is that too many language differences is the problem. Isn't the conventional wisdom of national standards just another version of this ancient story? Today we consider literacy differences as the babble of inequality that will be silenced by a set of monolithic national standards.

My mind is racing as I sit by the pool. My religion schema goes into overdrive and I realize that the language bishops have been chosen, they are meeting, they have a format, a model, but only drafts of the content. The stories told by each standard are yet to be written. I realize that the form and content of the standards is not my concern. My fear at pool-side is the potential for standards to promote or kill literacy learning, depending on how they are used.

Startled by cold water from the child's pool-side splashing I stop reading Morrison's speech. Feeling hungry, a little chilly, even stiff, I gather up the newspaper, my notes, and head back to my room for lunch with Joan. I think of what is happening in my head at pool-side here at the ARF conference. Is it fate that Toni Morrison's words fell into my lap just when I was thinking about writing a reaction paper for the ARF yearbook about national language standards? As I walk down the beach my excitement fades away. Do I really want to write a reaction paper? What will I eat for lunch? Where is Joan? When I get to our room I put my notes, Morrison's article, and other papers away. When I get back home I will pick them up. For now, I reason, best to let it rest. I can decide about getting involved with national standards when I am back at my office.

DECEMBER 13, 1994. It's a cold, rainy Monday afternoon, 5:20 p.m. Far away from the sunny Sanibel Sundial, back to the midwest again. Another ARF conference is over. I look ahead a few rows and I am shocked back to my Sunday morning pool-side encounter with Toni Morrison. It's Jean Osborn, Project Coordinator for the Standards Project for English Language. She is on this plane! What was she doing in Florida? I catch up with her in the chilly gangway to the terminal, reintroduce myself, telling her I was at the ARF meeting. She smiles, introduces me to a teacher from Champaign who is traveling with her. They were in Florida working on the national language standards project. Obviously in a hurry to catch a commuter flight to Champaign they turn their eyes from mine upward to the ceiling monitors and walk quickly away. My thoughts race back to when I wrote Jean Osborn's phone number in my notes at the start of Al's talk. Is this chance encounter in the plane a reminder to call her—to get involved? If only I had known she was on the plane! I could have sat next to her. I could have shared my concerns with her! I could have read Morrison's words about standards, surveillance, the language police.

I muse, if I run into Toni Morrison here in the airport, then I'll have to get involved. I've been chosen to stop the project, to criticize, and warn others of the danger of national standards. I bring Morrison's warning message to Jean Osborn and Al Farstrup. They see the dangers. They agree that the standards as tools for surveillance will do more harm than good. They ask me to speak with the language bishops. I read this reaction to them. They listen. They ask questions.

I convince them to stop the project. I am the hero.

Joan interrupts my dreaming. "You're walking the wrong way, the baggage claim is this way." I panic as I search my pockets for the car keys. I find them. I panic again trying to recall where to catch the shuttle to long term parking. I remember and calm down as I trudge through the terminal thinking—will I recognize Toni Morrison when I see her?

AUGUST 3 and 4, 1994. I call the Center for the Study of Reading and talk with a researcher. She says the U. S. Department of Education stopped funding the project on March 18, 1994. The center and the University of Illinois are no longer involved with the project. She says the IRA and NCTE are both committed to the project but I need to talk to them. I call IRA and speak with someone in research. She says IRA and NCTE are committed to the project. However, the original policy board, the three task forces, and the management team headed by Jean Osborn are all changed. She could not give me names, dates, or answer other questions about the fate of the standards project or any new time lines. She put my name on a mailing list and promised to send material in the future.

AUGUST 24, 1994. Two IRA newsletters on the standards arrive in the mail. IRA and NCTE commit $500,000 each to fund the project after federal funding is stopped. All previous documents placed under an embargo pending future planning. IRA and NCTE are "investigating the formation of a partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)." The three groups will collaborate to complete the standards. No dates, no details, a promise of more in the next, or third newsletter. In newsletter two I see a list of references (p. 3) and a form (pp. 6-7) I can use to FAX my opinions to IRA. Other portions of the newsletter address concerns about media and technology and non-English speaking students or those with disabilities (p. 2). I am struck by how casually the print hides the power of the standards. For example, I see the line "...Standards will treat **media and technology** (p. 2)," and "students...may not be fully accommodated by standards statements (p. 2)." I think they ought to print the words **treat** and **accommodate** in bold type. In the wrong hands standards come alive as agents that have great potential to treat (mistreat) and accommodate (control). They ask me to FAX them my opinion. On pages 3-5 I read a copy of Ken Goodman's objection to the standards. As I put the newsletters down I think maybe I'll send Ken my musings of December 12-13, 1994.

The Call to Forum - A Discussion of Ralph Fletcher's *Walking Trees*

Samuel S. Myers

The *Call to Forum* session at the American Reading Forum Conference at Sanibel Island in December, 1993, focused discussion on Ralph Fletcher's (1991) book, *Walking Trees*. The novel recounts his efforts, as a staff developer in the Writing Project at Teachers College, Columbia University, to teach teachers—"ponderous trees"—in the New York City schools "how to teach writing" (p. 5) as a process. "Ponderous trees" is perhaps a suitable metaphor for teachers deeply rooted in their traditional modes of classroom practice. Such teachers are usually *content* with the *content* of their prescribed curriculum and often walk the tightrope between innovation and tradition in education. Within the content of this metaphor, Fletcher seemed to have had his job clearly defined for him because he was engaged in a "staff development project trying to do nothing less than change the way teachers teach" (p. 94) writing.

Changing "the way teachers teach" writing necessitated a change from the traditional approach which advocated an emphasis on teacher assigned topics and the conventional requirements of grammar, syntax, punctuation, correct spelling, and the topic sentence/supporting details relationship. The traditional practices, therefore, focus attention on children's writing achievement in terms of their ability to apply these conventional requirements to the written product. Instruction in writing tended to demand perfection in the written product. However, little attention was given to understanding the process children engage in while they attempt to convey meaning and make sense of their own lives as emerging writers.

The staff development Writing Project was designed to effect change in the prevailing traditional attitude to, and practices in, writing instruction by getting the New York City school teachers to devote more attention to observing and understanding the writing process. This involved the creating of classroom environments in which students assumed greater responsibility for their writing activities by choosing topics, working at their own rate, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. This required a shift in the role of the teachers from commanders-in-chief of writing instruction to collaborators and facilitators of the writing process.

This article is an attempt to examine some of the issues emerging from Fletcher's professional encounters in his book, and is based primarily on this writer's presentation at the session as well as on the subsequent discussions generated. The issues are examined from two related perspectives: The first relates generally to problems of involvement and ownership engendered by attempts to initiate change in instructional practices through staff development projects or inservice training programs. The second perspective deals with issues specific to providing training to inservice teachers on the teaching of writing as a process.

Staff Development and Change - The Question of Ownership and Involvement

As one reads *Walking Trees*, by Fletcher, one gets the feeling that more of the time for the Staff Development Project should have been devoted to sharing ideas with the classroom teachers regarding instructional strategies relative to the teaching of writing as a process. At more frequent points in time, a forum could have been organized to discuss and evaluate with the teachers what was being attempted in their classrooms. It is not unlikely that there might have been a few teachers—even a few—contemplating the same theoretical ideas about the teaching of writing. They were probably looking for assistance and support to translate these ideas into common sense classroom practice. But in relating his initial experiences as a staff developer, Fletcher gave no indication that any organized effort was made to get this kind of information.

At least there was one common disposition characteristic of the New York City teachers. They wanted to talk and argue. The teacher trainers could therefore have chosen to capitalize on this disposition, to have discussions with the teachers regarding their involvement as classroom teachers. But initially, at least, this did seem to have been the case. Fletcher recalled: "in a crowded Bronx classroom I choose a child to watch" (p. 4). Then soon after he asked that same child, "Miranda, can I talk to you about your story?" Although his task as staff developer entailed "nothing less than teaching New York City teachers how to teach writing" (p. 5), his primary occupation was with the children in these teachers' classrooms. This is undoubtedly a good idea. There is no substitute for modeling in a staff development project designed to change the way teachers teach.

But the teachers also had a story to tell. Someone needed to listen to them. They also wanted an audience. It was not long before we are made aware of this in *Walking Trees*. Fletcher's encounter with the teacher, Peter Mathews, in the cafeteria foreshadowed the kind of rugged orientation he would experience as staff developer. It was also symbolic and perhaps representative of most of the teachers' suspicion, negative attitude, and perception about the staff development. Peter sounded like a "ponderous" tree.

> Last year writing process was hot in this district. This year thinking skills are the big thing. Writing process isn't new any more. Next year it'll be something else . . . In education just keeping track of what's in, what's out, I'll tell you, it's enough to make you tired. (p. 7)

This commentary from the classroom teacher was not just a statement about teacher confusion and teacher burn-out. It was also a documentary on the rate at which things were changing and how change was being managed and delivered. More specifically, it was to herald a statement of his own sense of a lack of involvement and ownership in the project designed to bring about change in the way teachers teach writing. He was probably a spokesman for the New York City school teachers. Consider Peter Mathews' commentary as he prepared his class for the first visit by the two teacher trainers, Jennifer and Ralph Fletcher: "There is a gentleman and lady outside from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, do you understand. They're here to work with you on your WRITING" (p. 8). This teacher was serious about having his class settled down in readiness for "the gentleman and lady outside from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY." But he was even more serious about the tenor of his statement in terms of his own relationship to the Writing Project. There was no sense of involvement or ownership here. The project involved "a gentleman and a lady outside," and they were there to work with them, not with him as a staff member, about their writing. There seemed to be no empowerment here for the teacher in a training project whose main charter was supposed to advocate staff development aimed at changing the way teachers teach. Does Morris (1985) have an appropriate word of caution here? She observed that "without the teacher's total involvement from the initial stages, any attempt at curriculum change will flounder" (p. 50).

The lack of teacher involvement and ownership in the writing project did not seem to have been confined to Fletcher's early experience as a staff developer. He pointed out that although his chief mandate required him to effect changes in the teachers' method of teaching writing, "the most absorbing part of my job continued to be the writing conferences with individual children" (p. 94).

The notion of individual conferences has received popular support in classroom practice for language arts instruction, particularly in the teaching of reading. In a staff development project where the focus is on providing teachers with strategies to teach writing as a process, the individual writing conferences would be indispensable. Individual writing conferences become the cornerstone of an instructional approach in which the emphasis is on process, on how children develop as writers, not on product, though not to its exclusion. We therefore give full marks to Mr. Fletcher for underscoring the significance of writing conferences in his staff development workshops.

But what of the teachers? Are they being empowered with ownership of this important teaching strategy? Fletcher's observation provided at least a partial answer, as he captured the general ethos of the individual writing conferences.

> Every day, as part of my demonstration teaching, I conferred with children on their writing. These encounters were supposed to take place under the watchful eye of the classroom teacher. But too often the teacher's attention would get distracted; he or she would wander off, and I'd find myself conferring with the child alone. My days were sweet with children—hundreds of them. (p. 94)

Assuming that this was representative of the general character of the writing conferences, then it would seem that for the few occasions when the teachers were observing the interaction between Fletcher and a student, the classroom teacher was merely a passive onlooker. This assumption acquired support as we got some understanding of the proceedings on Thursdays when the weekly evaluations of the Writing Project took place. Indeed, the modus operandi of the writing conferences reported above was not peculiar to Fletcher as a teacher trainer. However, what was of equal interest was that the classroom teachers were not represented at these evaluation sessions: "Thursdays have always been sacred at the Writing Project, reserved for intensive meetings between Lucy Calkins, Shelley Harwayne [director and co-director respectively], the teacher trainers, and researchers." (p. 43)

Is it surprising that at this level of the Writing Project, the teachers were not represented among those who discussed, evaluated, and provided feedback on the interactive processes taking place in the writing instruction classes? A typical dialogue at one of these Thursday sessions illustrated further the extent to which classroom teachers had minimal, if any, ownership and involvement in the demonstration teaching of the individual writing conferences. It is worth reiterating that these conferences were to achieve nothing less than empowering the teachers with those instructional strategies aimed at changing the way the—"ponderous trees"—were accustomed to teaching writing. The dialogue featured a feedback exchange between Lucy Calkins, project director, and a teacher trainer, Joan.

> Joan: . . . Teachers need to see the difference between the writing workshop and the way they used to teach writing
>
> Lucy: Say more about that.
>
> Joan: Well, for one thing it strikes me that the quality of the process teachers go through is not the same as the process kids go through. In some ways, the kids go through a richer experience in the writing workshop.
>
> Lucy: Right. The kids are writing. The teachers are on the outside watching. (p. 47)

The teachers invariably seem to be on the outside of the Writing Project. Fletcher probably voiced the sentiments of all the teacher trainers when he said, "the most absorbing part of my job continued to be the writing conferences with children" (p. 94) and further that his "days were sweet with children" (p. 94). We do not get the impression that the teacher trainers experienced any semblance of this cordial rapport and absorbing interaction with the teachers, during the demonstration teaching sessions, as they did with the children.

The composition of the team engaged in the intensive evaluation sessions on Thursdays does not only reflect the prevailing absence of teacher involvement in another aspect of the writing project's implementation. In fact, the dialogue cited above indicated a qualitative difference in the nature and degree of the teachers' participation when compared with that of the children. The children were much more at home during demonstration teaching sessions. Fletcher reported on the contrasting relationship as follows:

> . . . the kids seemed far more comfortable with my regular visits than the teachers. . . . teachers may have associated my visits with evaluations and nerve-racking formal observations. . . it took a long

time to break down this mistrust. (p. 96)

Those in charge of administering and implementing the writing project were apparently aware of the lack of teacher involvement. There was even a recognition of the need to improve the teachers' relationship with the project—the need to create a more permanent and meaningful relationship. In fact, Lucy Calkins, the project director,

> realized . . . that for the writing process to have a lasting impact, it wouldn't be enough merely to work with students. To make a significant impact on the system teachers themselves would have to learn to teach writing in a new way. (p. 44)

But this notion of improving teachers' involvement did not seem to have advanced beyond the level of awareness and intent among the leading players in the project. Either there was not enough sustained effort in this direction by the decision makers, or the teachers—ponderous trees—were too firmly established in their traditional methods which insisted on compliance with the conventional requirements of grammar, correct spelling, and punctuation for the final written product.

In spite of the apparent lack of involvement by most teachers, a few seemed to have been fascinated by the concept of teaching writing as a process. Fletcher himself was involved in an exhaustive staff development project working with the students. Had there been more teacher involvement and ownership in the writing project, we are left with the impression that the great majority of teachers would have benefited from more meaningful participation. However, Fletcher's interaction with the children during the individual writing conferences has provided important suggestions and raised significant issues specific to the focus of the staff development project.

Important Issues Related to the Teaching of Writing as a Process

The issues considered under this heading are derived from what Ralph Fletcher appeared to have successfully accomplished during those demonstration teaching sessions in *Walking Trees*. The encouraging hypothesis, emerging from these considerations, is that if more involvement had been encouraged and sustained among the classroom teachers, a greater majority of them would have acquired knowledge and ownership of those teaching strategies peculiar to the teaching of writing as a process.

The overriding issue generated by Fletcher's experiences in the Writing Project seems to be that knowledge about the teaching of writing as a process is not something that exists separately from people—teacher trainers, teachers, and students. Together, teacher trainers and teachers needed to observe children more closely. Even if there had not been agreement among teacher trainers and teachers about the teaching of writing, both groups could have used their understanding of language and literacy development to make sense of what the children were showing them. Cooperatively, trainers and teachers could have been more constructively engaged in what Yetta Goodman (1977) called kid-watching. The teachers would realize that when children write they are trying to refashion their view of the world and widen their ability to think about it. In other words, as the teachers participate in observing how students engage themselves in learning to write, the teachers would also become a part of the process instead of remaining on the outside watching. In short, as classroom practitioners they would have gained useful insights about the writing process.

Four important issues emerging from Fletcher's staff development encounters provide us with invaluable insights about the teaching of writing as a process:

1. As we observe students engage themselves in writing pursuits we will understand how they are managing their own experiments: trying out notions of correctness relating to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. Writing activities often derive inspiration from the strengths as well as from the weaknesses of students' literary abilities. Mistakes are inevitable during the writing process and children have the capacity to assume responsibility for their own writing when it is perceived by themselves and others as valuable and interesting. Fletcher captured the importance of this knowledge when he pointed out that the nuts and bolts of launching the writing process classroom involved:

> . . . helping teachers to set up a classroom where children could use some of the strategies professional writers use—choosing their own topics, working at their own paces, drafting and revising, editing and publishing. (p. 5)

Opportunities to foster this kind of ethos could be missed if teachers fail to make use of children's interests, strengths, and weaknesses which are observable during classroom interactions.

2. Teaching writing as a process involves realizing that, in the language arts curriculum, learning to write is not a prescribed course of study or a particular set of instructional materials. It is a mental pilgrimage taken personally by each writer—each child. Accordingly,

the writing experiences, by virtue of their unpredictable nature, demand that children be provided with the most complete, yet complex, environment possible so that they can be involved with the activities in whatever way is most useful to them. As Fletcher remarked,

> . . . writing matters a lot to these kids, because it gives them a way to make sense of their lives. That's what happens when kids start to write stories. That's the real benefit. (p. 47)

However, this will mean that although it will be necessary to provide opportunities for creative activities, all students cannot be expected to approach an activity in the same way. It will also mean that they cannot be expected to produce the same outcome either in terms of the prescribed criteria for performance, or in terms of the content of the experiences reported.

3. Writing, as a learning experience, is socially constructed and context dependent. Accordingly children derive interest from a variety of situations and contexts that shape what and how they write. The social and context dependent nature of the writing process also requires that classroom writing interactions by collaborative between teachers and students, as well as among students. Fletcher illustrated the extent to which writing as a process is socially constructed and context dependent as he identified the various situations, moments, feelings, and sentiments which provided the basis for the children's various writing pursuits: "Jealousy" (p. 107); "My Brother is Dead" (p. 146); "An Unhappy Day" (p. 151); "When My Teacher Got Scared" (p. 65); "The Shuttle Blown-Up Story" (p. 142); "Tadpoles" (p. 208); "Butterflies" (p. 214); "Bread and Jam" (p. 179). In *Walking Trees*, Fletcher demonstrated how collaboration between himself and the children resulted in decisions about choices of topics.

To the extent that the writing process is collaborative, it will be useful for children to write from their reading and read what they have written. This was consistent with the experiences of Fletcher as he commented on the relationship between writing and reading during classroom sessions when students share their writings with peers, following the individual writing conferences. He recalled that "teaching writing...involves teaching reading, that is, teaching children how to skillfully use their emerging drafts" (p. 205).

As children collaborate with peers and teachers and read the products of their writings, teachers will discover that although these products may seem unconventional, by adult standards, children have fairly good strategies for exploring language through writing and reading. The emerging drafts are involved in what Harste, Burke, and Woodward (1983) called fine-tuning language with language as children alternate roles as writers and readers of their writing. Fletcher hoped that the New York City school teachers would learn this from the Writing Project when he observed that:

> Writers . . . separate out into two people when they write: the writer/creator and the critic who stands back to evaluate what has been written. (p. 156)

4. For children—young writers—perhaps the most important reward of the writing process is the dignity derived from their sense of authorship. As teachers we could deprive them of this sense of dignity. Our instructional strategies can over-emphasize the writing conventions related to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and neat handwriting to the point where children perceive conventions as more important than the meanings they are attempting to convey.

The role of children as authors was an important feature of Fletcher's experience in *Walking Trees*. This was particularly evident in his interaction with them during the individual writing conferences. These classroom encounters were often evidence that diligence as an author and accountability to an audience are responsibilities that children can assume during their early writing initiatives. This was first illustrated when Carmelia, a third grader, "takes her place in the author's chair and reads the beginning of a story" (p. 105). Then later, "during the following weeks Carmelia's story expands into a chapter, which in turn grows into a book...in two weeks Carmelia returns to the author's chair to read her story to the class" (p. 105).

However, as one teacher had to be reminded by Fletcher, experiences of this nature would be absent from the writing endeavors of children if the conventional requirements for the written product were given too much emphasis as Fletcher points out speaking to Veray, a teacher,

> Veray, if teachers like you expected the same amount of perfection in kids' early talks as you do in kids' early writing, there would be a lot of people walking around who don't even talk at all. (p. 207)

In fact, it was teacher attitude of this nature, towards the teaching of writing, that led Fletcher to use the metaphor ponderous trees in describing teachers who were too deeply rooted in their emphasis on the conventional requirements of the written product.

But not all teachers continue as ponderous trees—resistant to change in their instructional strategies. Indeed, there is no better person in a classroom like a reflective teacher. After reflecting on a previous suggestion by Fletcher, this same teacher was able to report as follows:

> Well I thought about what you said last time you were here . . . about

> how we've got to support kids' beginning writing . . . When they finished writing it seemed like the thing to do was just put the writing up so everyone could see it, spelling and all. (p. 208)

It is probably significant that *Walking Trees* ends on this note—the pride of authorship. In the *Epilogue*, Fletcher is leaving school at the end of the day. A boy 'hails' him: "Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Fletcher! Carlos from last year...Don't you remember?...I was an author last year" (p. 222). Carlos' declaration testified to his pride of the dignity of authorship. However, "was—last year" would seem to indicate that he declared his feelings only in retrospect.

Summary and Conclusions

Yes! Carlos was an author last year. He is still in school. What was he that following year! He is still proud of his past year's experience as an author. Was his occupation as an author now a matter of history? If so, was he a spokesman for the majority of children who probably returned to the influence of the "familiar terrain" (p. 203) of their teachers? This was probably the apprehension that Fletcher entertained at the beginning of the Writing Project when he said:

> I am haunted by the image of launching children into some kind of curriculum limbo. After I leave what kind of instruction will they have this year? Assigned topics? Copying stories off the blackboard? (p. 13)

Innovations in instructional strategies usually work well when there is a sense of involvement and ownership. Teachers admire trainers like Fletcher who teach by example rather than by precepts. The demonstration teaching sessions in Fletcher's individual writing conferences were exemplary. The involvement and ownership necessary for the majority of teachers would require them to abdicate their traditional control over students' writing activities. Not only did the teachers need to trust the sense of what Fletcher and his colleagues were attempting to demonstrate, but they also needed to trust their students' sense of responsibility in choosing what was useful in their own writing strategies. Teacher ownership and involvement in the writing project resided partially in the teachers' willingness to discover ways of coming to value their students' writing strategies. But the teacher trainers needed to give the teachers that feeling of confidence that they, more than the trainers, had control of the territory where change was taking place.

As Fletcher pointed out in his *Acknowledgments*, *Walking Trees* is not a "blueprint for teachers who might want to incorporate writing process in their classrooms" (p. xiii). However, the book provides some useful information which can be considered from two perspectives. The first relates to the question of involvement and ownership in attempts to initiate change in instructional strategies among teachers, ponderous trees, who are firmly rooted in the conventional practices of their territory. Those who own the territory must have a meaningful input in determining the ethos that will fashion the change process.

The second involves the specific scope and nature of the change in instructional strategies—that of teaching teachers to teach writing as a process. Fletcher's account of his demonstration teaching sessions provides us with invaluable insights into how writing can be taught as a process. His experiences, recounted in the individual writing conferences, would seem to invite the view that if we had given more serious attention to the process-oriented model of teaching writing earlier, we would probably have displayed greater concern for the quality and type of teacher training programs required for implementing the teaching of writing as process. Then, we would not find it necessary to be so anxious about the conventional prerequisites for the finished product. As process-oriented teacher trainers and teachers, we would have become more sensitive observers of children's writing behaviors as they engage themselves in the writing process,

Therefore, we need to be constantly aware that the more we know about the young writers and the writing process, the better will be our understanding about strategies necessary to improve writing as a product. The information for that knowledge is, as Newman (1985) reminded us, to be found in the classroom "before our eyes and under our noses" (p. 2). Without abdicating our interest in product, it might be that a bottom line message in our last *Call to Forum* session is that, as teacher educators and teachers, we occupy ourselves some more with process in language arts instruction.

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Elementary School Adopts Two Reading Professors: Lessons From a Five Year Partnership

Lynn C. Smith, Lawrence G. Erickson,

This article describes how two reading professors and the entire ten-person faculty and administration of a small, midwestern parochial school blended their collective expertise to nudge and facilitate change in reading and writing instruction from within the school. While school improvement is the main story to be told in this paper, it is worth mentioning another outcome: how the professors came to be accepted as insiders by the teachers and the principal. Usually professors are outsiders and their effectiveness as school improvement consultants is not only elusive, it is at best limited. Professors are not usually around enough, and, when they are, tensions and conflict arise from a variety of sources. The most common source is that principals' and classroom teachers' concerns are contextualized by practical, everyday issues, while professors tend to think along decontextualized or more general and theory-oriented lines (Lanier, 1983). While this paper tells how we, as professors, and the staff (the principal and teachers) overcame these tensions, the more important story to be told is how five years of monthly meetings led to improvements in reading and language arts instruction.

Partnership Beginnings

The partnership between the professors and the staff was an informal occurrence in school improvement where mutual growth among all of the participants evolved slowly from a rather tentative beginning. It grew into a reciprocal arrangement based on trust and mutual interests. Instead of being a project with a fixed beginning and ending, the process grew and is now firmly imbedded in the school. Here is how it started.

The initial impetus came during the early fall of 1987 from Martha, a teacher at St. Mary's School. She had taken our reading courses at the university, and because we had supported her in changes she was making in her classroom she asked us to help other teachers at the school. At a meeting in our offices Martha, Lorna, the school principal, and the school's parish priest made their straightforward pitch: the school needs your help, there is no consulting money, but you will have the potential of long-term research. At this meeting some of the school's problems were discussed—dropping achievement scores, high teacher turnover, low morale, and the need to implement new teaching ideas in reading and the other language arts. They asked us to visit classes at the school, talk with the entire faculty, outline some of the needs we might observe during our visit, and share our overall assessment with the staff. The meeting ended with a general agreement that this was an open-ended arrangement, one that could turn into an on-going, rather than a one-shot, school improvement project.

Some Initial Concerns

First of all, as professors with consulting experience, we were aware that school improvement is complicated; hence, the two of us did not enter this arrangement without some misgivings. We knew that as outsiders our visit would likely provoke a certain level of reserve among the staff. Our initial problem would be to overcome our outsider status and gain the trust of the staff. Based upon our familiarity with the long range nature of the change process, and our own experiences in elementary/middle schools, we were concerned about the need for a long-term commitment to the school. We knew that authentic and lasting change would only take place slowly over time (Fullan, 1985).

What Problems Did the School Have?

A few weeks after our initial meeting we drove to Chester, Illinois, and spent a day observing classes, talking with teachers at lunch, meeting with the principal. Our initial impression was that St. Mary's, like other small schools both public and private in our region, had problems associated with limited funding. Because the teachers' salaries were exceptionally low, teacher turnover had been extraordinary. It was not unusual for more than a third of the faculty to change yearly. This meant, among other things, that teachers did not know each other very well. According to the principal, who was in her first year of administration, this high turnover also contributed to a lack of curriculum articulation and to school-wide inconsistency among instructional goals and objectives.

Our initial classroom visits that day revealed a few teaching problems, but the two of us agreed that the faculty as a whole was basically strong. We agreed that we had seen some excellent teaching, and at the meeting with the entire staff after school we provided positive feedback and praise about lessons we had observed.

This initial meeting with everyone at the school also revealed some adversarial positions among the faculty and the administration as well as a lack of collegiality among the faculty. All of these difficulties had compounded to negatively affect the instructional climate and the learning outcomes of the students in this pre-kindergarten through eighth grade school. We learned from some teachers that, in the past, St. Mary's graduates had been in the top quartile of students at the local high school; over the past several years, that position had eroded and those graduates were now to be found in the middle and low quartiles. Neither parents nor faculty were happy with that outcome.

As expected, this initial meeting in the school library with the faculty and the principal was tense. With the exception of those who were familiar with us from our university contacts, the teachers approached that session, us, and each other with a tangible wariness. At this initial meeting the teachers asked us to tell them what we thought would help St. Mary's. We said that our experience as teacher educators had led us to believe that a remedial approach to school improvement is a turn-off to teachers. We also told them that it is important that the staff, with our input, determine initial ideas and directions for school improvement. We tried to make it clear from the beginning that, while we had ideas that might help, we had processes rather than pat answers or quick fix products. We also said that as reading specialists we could offer ideas about teaching materials, teaching strategies, instructional settings, and curriculum articulation. We shared some general ideas on teaching reading and writing and we passed out copies of current articles. The ideas and materials were received passively by a rather stone-faced faculty.

While our 42-mile car ride home that afternoon found us puzzling over those dynamics and the lack of interaction that had taken place during our meeting, we also found ourselves eagerly planning what to do at the November meeting. Little did we know that years later we would be writing a description of how the partnership had developed over time and how the school had changed.

Tension in the Beginning

Our five years of direct involvement with the staff consisted mainly of monthly meetings while school was in session from October 1987 until May 1992. A typical session was held on one Wednesday a month from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. when the students had been dismissed early. In addition, there were occasions when we professors, as individuals, returned to the school to visit classes and meet with the principal and/or segments of the faculty. The two of us spent a fair amount of time locating relevant articles and research to share with the staff at these meetings. At some early meetings we shared videos that illustrated some of the best reading and writing practices. But mainly everyone at the meetings talked, argued, shared, asked questions, and listened to each other in an informal manner.

Throughout the meetings we, as researchers, tried to take stock of what was happening. We kept a notebook to log important ideas, monitor decisions, and write notes reminding us of what we needed to do before the next monthly meeting. At some sessions an audiotape recorder was used to capture the sense that both professors and teachers had similar concerns and feelings. Like us, the staff was uneasy during that first year. At the last session in May 1988 we asked the staff to write about what had happened during that year of meetings. Teachers openly admitted that initially they had not wanted to take time for what they considered useless expert advice. They were also uneasy not knowing which direction the sessions might head. Several teachers who were new to St. Mary's that first year had difficulty coping just with their newness. Martha, the teacher who had instigated this arrangement, indicated that she herself had found the sessions "strained but helpful." She reported some frustration in not getting to "meatier" issues right away. At the same time, she felt relief that the staff "would have a sounding board against which both positive and negative ideas and practices could bounce." This tentative but positive stance was representative of the faculty. Each month during this first year we polled the group, and while there was a consensus that these sessions should continue, specific school improvement ideas did not surface until late in the school year.

Basic Needs Come First

At our early meetings, the St. Mary's staff was very cautious about committing themselves to specific improvement topics. When we asked for topics of concern from the staff, we received little or no response. Discussion at these sessions was initially forced and reluctant, but by mid-winter in 1988 some questions were being posed by the principal and a couple of the teachers in response to our offerings. Individually, a couple of the staff members made a point to talk with us after the others had left our afternoon meetings. It was obvious that we were still in the early stages of the partnership process. We still had not reached any consensus on what to work on, as individuals or a group.

Our first progress toward some common improvement efforts came at our January and February 1988 meetings. We asked the teachers to write responses to the question "What would make this school a better place for you, as workers, and for students, as learners?" All responses were shared and an enthusiastic discussion revealed two common concerns. One problem was that the school office was poorly located—creating privacy problems and traffic jams. The other was that the teachers had no lounge or work place. Both of these are labeled *hygiene* needs according to Maslow's (1970) well known hierarchy of needs. The principal agreed with both the problems and with several of the teachers' suggested solutions. She approached the school board parents who were architects and contractors. To everyone's pleasure, remodeling plans were drawn moving the office location and creating a teachers' lounge/work-place.

Initial Changes

Unbeknown to us during the first six months of meetings, one of the teachers had cautiously and quietly been moving away from a total reliance upon the basal reader for reading instruction and had utilized trade books, encouraging students to read them both for pleasure and for purposes of class discussion. During these early meetings we professors had shared the idea of using literature in this way—but Judy had kept quiet. She didn't ask us to confirm her rationales and procedures. But after experiencing success, in terms of positive response from her students, she did let us in on her excitement—in private. Instead of telling her story in front of everyone, she disclosed her secret quietly and privately to us at the end of one session in early Spring 1988. However, at the next monthly meeting, she did openly disclose her new practice of using trade books to teach reading. Judy's enthusiastic report of how students were enjoying reading was verified by another teacher and the principal. This seemed to mark the beginning of a more open climate of exchange and of our acceptance by the teachers. After Judy's disclosure, and as the end of the school year approached, two items of major importance to the faculty quickly came to the forefront.

The first of these was a concern about aliteracy—the widespread phenomenon in which persons who can read choose not to. The St. Mary's teachers agreed that this was a problem, and they expressed a willingness to try to get students to enjoy, value, and read more. Judy's experiences seemed to be one way to deal with aliteracy.

After brainstorming and exploring several options to encourage greater reading at every grade level within St. Mary's, the teachers decided to attempt a cross-grade paired reading component (Rasinski, 1988; Topping, 1987). Lower and upper grade classes would be paired for pleasure reading, sometimes silently, sometimes orally, in pairs or in small groups. This idea was attempted a few times in the Spring of 1988 and continued during the 1988-89 school year with fifth graders reading with the first graders, sixth with second, seventh with third, and eighth graders with the fourth graders. Reports from the teachers indicate that the cross-grade component began enthusiastically and remains successful.

The second change attempted that first year by the St. Mary's faculty was in the vocabulary and spelling program. We had shared several articles with them about new ideas in reading and writing (May, 1986), and several teachers expressed a desire to teach spelling from a more personal vocabulary viewpoint. In place of the weekly list of words from the workbook, teachers chose words generally from two sources: content area terminology and words which caused students difficulty or they wanted to learn to spell. From March 1988 to the end of the school year in June, all first through eighth grade teachers used this approach, with teachers organizing their programs to suit their particular classroom needs. Most included a strong dictionary usage component in their programs. The teachers' end-of-the-year self reports evaluating the program indicated that they had all observed an improved ability on the part of their students to use the dictionary and to make much more frequent unprompted use of it. Almost all the classroom programs included weekly dictation tests, and all stressed contextual meaning and use through writing. The teachers were unanimous in their support for continuation of the spelling program into the next year. They were especially enthused about the program's relevance to their instructional coursework and the students' writing progress. Students brought their own pocket dictionaries to school and were observed using them on their own.

As the first year ended, the topic of discussion at the monthly meetings focused on the paired reading and the new spelling program. The teachers were sure that these new ways worked better than what they had been doing previously. We professors were excited too. While some teachers were still passive, we saw some really good teaching strategies being implemented. And we both agreed that a key to implementation was that new teaching ideas were initially attempted quietly by one or more of the teachers before the other teachers agreed to participate. The success of the paired reading and spelling ideas led to an overall change in the climate of the monthly meetings.

The teachers shared, teased and joked, admitted goofing, and told stories of classroom incidents. A feeling of teamwork replaced the initial coldness.

School Climate Changes

From then on, the monthly meetings had a positive effect on the school climate. Fullan (1985) contends that the organizational conditions within a school determine the degree of success one will have in prompting change. This was certainly borne out with our experience at St. Mary's. Initially, we encountered a faculty which had had relatively little substantive interaction with the school's principal. She was new to her job; some of the faculty members were also new, and others were wary of the administrative domain.

A significant factor contributing to the change from passive wariness to a positive university-local school connection was the active participation of the principal. Not only was Lorna involved in the initial meeting from which the present situation has evolved, but she was present and active at each and every meeting. For the first few sessions, it often seemed as if she were the only one asking the questions. Fortunately, she had a large and ready store of concerns from which to draw! Her situation as a first year administrator probably contributed to that stance; she has been eager to learn, to promote whatever is in the best interests of her students and faculty. After much initial wariness and hesitation, the teachers have reacted positively to her openness. Likewise, we professors noticed that Lorna was less hesitant, more confident, and had settled into a leadership pattern that featured a balance between listening and responding, on the one hand, and directing and managing, on the other. Her style of school governance is perhaps the key ingredient to the partnership, the changes in reading and writing instruction, and the support of the staff and the parents that continue in 1994.

Another factor appears to be that, as an organization, the staff expected these Wednesday sessions to continue with us in the role of accepted outsiders who listen, share, encourage, and provide ideas and support. Both faculty members and the principal repeatedly expressed relief at having our expert backing for curricular changes they have made. They feel more confident in talking to parents and to educational personnel in other settings about the school's program, knowing that they can cite us as support. Teachers said that our comments and the support of other teachers seemed to free some of them professionally to teach in ways not previously accepted by themselves, by earlier administrators, and by some parents. One teacher said, "These meetings seemed to give me permission to trust myself." The first year ended with plans to continue the monthly meetings in the coming school year. An informal but strong partnership appeared to be forming.

The Second Year

When the faculty met again with us in August 1988, a different sense of the group was very apparent. Two of the more negative staff members from the previous year had left, and the new teachers seemed to be much more in tune with the other members of the faculty. This influx of new blood seemed to energize the others of the faculty, and the comfort level of everyone rose noticeably.

During this second year, the reading and spelling projects were made a part of the instructional day. Although Lorna, as principal, reported getting a little flak from a few parents about dropping the spelling workbooks, she continued to support the changes. Newsletters explaining the reading and spelling ideas were sent home early in the school year, and parental concerns were dealt with individually.

Change also came to the larger St. Mary's community. For the first time, during the 1988-89 school year, an academic honors banquet was celebrated with the help of the teachers and several eager parents. Individual teachers found themselves pulled into the developing flow of instructional change. At the monthly meetings during the second year, questions and ideas from nearly every teacher were batted around, modifications made, and new ideas broached. A teacher-as-researcher grant proposal was written, outlining an integrated format for teaching students at every grade level to think more clearly. One of the newest teachers commented, "Knowing we would talk about it again at our next meeting made me take action (in the classroom)." He felt that that pressure had brought about the positive interaction with his peers and with us. A positive climate for change had replaced a climate of wariness.

Years Three and Four

At a monthly meeting in Spring 1990, we asked the staff to compare the climate that had existed in 1987-88 with the current atmosphere. The room erupted into laughter as individuals recalled the silence, the hidden agendas, and the fear that had existed only two years before. We recalled that the first changes they had asked for during an early needs assessment session were a better location for the principal's office and a lounge-workroom for the teachers. In August 1990, as the fourth year of meetings resumed, it was most satisfying to everyone to notice that during the summer a new principal's office and teacher lounge-workspace had been constructed. Here was tangible proof that these monthly sessions had made St. Mary's a better place to work.

While the third and fourth years were marked by optimism about the instructional program and the organizational climate, everyone acknowledged that making changes is risky, hard work. The teachers had first hand experience that change involves commitment, energy, trust, a willingness to make mistakes, rethink, and start over. We professors realized that our acceptance in the partnership was not the most important outcome. While their acceptance of us is a source of our own rejuvenation, it is clear to us that the principal and the teachers are the primary change agents. We are only sounding boards and resource facilitators. The partnership is not one of respected experts directing the learning of others. Instead, teachers and professors learn from each other. This has produced a very positive tension, all of our minds and attitudes have been stretched, and a symbiotic relationship exists that appears to be healthy for everyone.

Current Status

Today, we keep in touch by phone and occasionally visit the school. In 1992-93 and into 1994 the principal, Lorna, continues to have monthly meetings with the staff. We keep in regular contact with her, and although we do not meet regularly with the teachers there is a continued closeness. More significantly, there is continued collaboration among the teachers and the principal. She is convinced that they have implemented many excellent reading and writing improvements. At the December 1993 American Reading Forum, Lorna shared the following:

> *Today, teachers seek out the professors for information that is relevant to their classroom teaching. The professors are welcomed by the faculty and during discussions ideas are listened to and often tried. Teachers implement ideas from professional conferences and journals. They openly share ideas with each other. Teachers willingly seek advice from many sources and freely ask questions about current ideas in education. Teachers use many more creative ideas and incorporate many holistic approaches to meet the curriculum goals. Parents are much more informed because teachers communicate with weekly work examples, notes about projects, newsletters, and take-home folders. Reports from the local high school indicate that St. Mary's students rank higher in academics and the school is perceived more positively in the community.*

What We've Learned

As professors we not only got a place to do research. We have some evidence that we are now insiders fortunate enough to view and share change from the bottom up. Here are some things we have learned from this experience:

1. Initial contacts raised anxieties and created tensions. It took at least five monthly meetings before teachers shared ideas and discussed possible changes openly with colleagues.

2. Initial ideas that led to changes always came from the teachers rather than from us. The basic need to fix the office and work space problem was the first sign of common goal setting. The paired reading idea evolved from one teacher's success with the sustained silent reading of library books in her classroom.

3. The principal's active involvement and support kept the meetings going. Her prompting and listening and overall support were crucial to the partnership.

4. Monthly meetings on school time became an important forum for teachers to share their power for planning instruction with each other and the principal. These meetings became a natural and important part of school governance.

5. Our most effective role has been to be good listeners and to support teachers' ideas with research and specific suggestions. Time and again teachers and the principal said they felt more confident about what they were doing because we had backed them up at the meetings.

6. Changes were implemented because there was a balance of input from within and from outside the school. This balance has been sustained long enough for the principal and the teachers to try out ideas and receive support, hints for success, and recognition. Long term commitment to a process that supports change is essential.

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Pre-Service Teachers' Literacy Dispositions

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Research from various disciplines confirms that teachers teach what they like and feel comfortable teaching (Weiss, 1989). With the increased emphasis on integrating reading and writing instruction across the curriculum, educators at every grade level and in all subject areas find themselves directly supporting the literacy development of learners. If teachers intend to spark positive literacy dispositions among their students, is it not essential that they personally feel competent and comfortable as readers and writers?—that they elect to engage regularly in reading and writing activities in their own lives? These thoughts and questions became the impetus for our development of an instrument to assess pre-service teachers' personal attitudes towards both reading and writing.

Our current work builds upon a body of research that advocates a tripartite theory of attitude, a model developed by Rosenberg and Hovland (1960). The theory suggests that attitude has three components: one cognitive, one affective, and one behavioral. Each is distinguishable and necessary as an indicator of attitude toward reading (Lewis & Teale, 1980). Our study extends research on reading attitudes to include those related to writing. Specifically, we evaluated the literacy dispositions of pre-service teachers to discern their personal beliefs and opinions, feelings, and uses of reading and writing. We developed the *Writing or Reading Disposition Scale - Revised* (WORDS-R) for this purpose. In this article, we will discuss the development of the WORDS-R and its use with pre-service teachers in a large urban university in the Southeastern United States.

Methods

Subjects and Procedures

Subjects were 112 pre-service teachers enrolled in the final phase of their teacher-preparation program. Of these, 9 were male. Approximately 50 percent of the respondents described themselves as Hispanic, 42 percent as White, 4 percent as Black, and 4 percent as other or did not indicate their ethnicity. Subjects ranged in age from 21 to 45 years, with more than half under the age of 24, and only a few over the age of 30.

Subjects carried out their student teaching responsibilities during day-time public school hours. Additionally, one evening per week, they met together during Senior Seminar, a course designed to support student teaching experiences. The majority of the subjects, 84 percent, were enrolled in Senior Seminar on one campus, with 14 percent on another. Data for this study were collected during one seminar class on each campus.

We included the WORDS-R as one part of a battery of instruments that we assembled to examine some of the general characteristics, attitudes, beliefs, and preferences held by education majors. In addition to the WORDS-R, we included in the battery the *Miculecky Behavioral Reading Attitude Measure* (MBRAM) and several other more general psychological and attitudinal scales. We will relate the WORDS-R to the MBRAM in another section of this paper.

Before distributing the battery of instruments, we advised subjects that (a) participation in the study was voluntary, (b) their responses would remain anonymous, and (c) neither participation in the study nor results would affect their Senior Seminar or Student Teaching grades. After providing general instructions, we permitted subjects the opportunity to ask procedure-clarifying questions. Subjects then worked individually, at their own rate. A few subjects turned-in their completed instruments after about 25 minutes. The majority finished in approximately 45 minutes, and only a few subjects took as long as one hour.

At a later time, protocols were hand-scored, and data were entered on a computer for analysis. Specific statistical analyses will be identified as we present and discuss results.

Instrumentation

We constructed (*Writing or Reading Disposition Scale - Revised*) WORDS-R after piloting our initial *Writing or Reading Disposition Scale* (WORDS). We developed WORDS to assess literacy (reading and writing) attitudes. Subjects self-reported **actual** reading and writing behaviors during the 48-hour period just prior to completing the questionnaire. When piloting this instrument, we discovered that specifying the 48-hour period unduly constrained and interfered with the reporting of typical literacy behaviors.

Subsequently, we revised the instrument, thus creating WORDS-R. Using WORDS-R, subjects self-reported **habitual** literacy behaviors. After reading each of the 15 items, subjects selected from a 5 point scale the description they thought most characteristic of them. In constructing the instrument, we attempted to define literacy behaviors broadly, from reading menus to books and from writing telephone messages to narrative or expository text. Data gathered through use of the WORDS-R were used for analyzing pre-service teachers' literacy dispositions for this study.

Research as Process

An essential aspect of research-as-process resides in the thinking and discussion stimulated by inquiry. Findings and results support this process and are of ancillary value as ends in themselves. Our collaboration as researchers was intentional as we worked to inform ourselves through earnest dialogue and reflection. In our attempt to extend our dialogue with you, the reader, we invite you to do the following before continuing with the remainder of this paper.

1. Please use the Appendix. Here you will find WORDS-R with the frequencies and percents by item for our population.

2. For the moment, ignore the results and respond to each item using the WORDS-R response scale. Notice questions, concerns, or insights that spring to mind related to your interaction with each item.

3. When you have completed the instrument, revisit each item comparing your response to the frequencies and percentages of our population. Again, notice questions, concerns, or insights about the instrument, yourself as a responder, or the reading/writing processes, etc.

Your first-hand experience with WORDS-R will provide a rich context within which to consider the thoughts presented herein.

Results and Discussion

Because our study had a dual focus, we will report the results in two sections. First, we will present findings and discuss results related to the literacy dispositions of our subjects. Then, we will address aspects of validity and reliability associated with the data collection instrument, WORDS-R.

Literacy Disposition of Preservice Teachers

We entered our data by calculating *frequency* and *percent* for scale results within each item. Through this descriptive information we gleaned specific information about the self-reported literacy dispositions of our subjects (*N* = 112). For example, using a typical 48 hour period as a frame of reference, the majority of pre-service teachers indicated the following as being on **slightly** or **not at all characteristic** of them: reading a newspaper for a total of at least an hour (53.5% of the subjects): reading a chapter of a book other than a text book (52.7%); reading a professional journal (56.2%); writing a narrative or expository piece other than an assignment (87.5%); writing in a diary or journal (67.8%). On the other hand, subjects reported the following as **very** or **extremely characteristic** of them: reading instruction/directions (61.6% of the subjects); reading aloud to someone (75.9%); enjoying reading (72.4%); believing that reading equates with personal success (79.5%); believing reading equates with personal growth (79.5%); writing a list (77.6%); writing a personal reminder (83%); and, enjoying writing (55.3%), among other items. The Appendix contains within-item frequencies and percents for each WORDS-R item. These findings provide a rich data source from which to develop questions about this specific set of subjects and their teacher-preparation programs.

We examined our data from another perspective by calculating total mean scores for each of the items across all subjects in this study. This resulted in 12 total mean scores for reading and 13 total mean scores for writing. Table 1 summaries our findings.

Table 1

Total Mean Scores by Item and Sub-item for the WORDS-R (N = 112)

Reading	MEAN[a]	Writing
	1.59	narrative/expository
map	1.99	
	2.13	journal/diary
	2.21	letter
professional journal	2.30	
textbook	2.41	
newspaper	2.49	

book chapter	2.56	
recipe	2.69	
menu	2.87	
magazine	2.87	
	3.32	directions
	3.59	successful
	3.62	grow
directions	3.63	
	3.67	enjoy
	3.67	assignment
	3.71	phone message
	3.89	memo
read aloud	4.07	
enjoy	4.11	
successful	4.14	
grow	4.18	
	4.29	list
	4.32	personal reminder (note)

a

1 = Not at all characteristic of me
2 = Slightly characteristic of me
3 = Moderately characteristic of me
4 = Very characteristic of me
5 = Extremely characteristic of me

For example, with a total mean score of 1.59, our subjects self-reported that in a typical 48 hour period writing a narrative or expository piece other than for an assignment was **not at all** or **slightly characteristic** of them. Conversely, writing a list or a personal reminder (note), with a mean score of 4.32, tended to be **very** or **extremely characteristic** typical behavior.

Initially, we were somewhat surprised to find that subjects reported most of the items related to reading as less characteristic of them than most of the items related to writing. After discussion and reflection, we believe that our selection of reading and writing items for the instrument may not be parallel in nature. We wonder how the results would shift if we were to ask about reading a medicine bottle, a street sign, a food label, a greeting card, etc. Is it possible to develop a list of basically parallel reading and writing behaviors? What should such lists include? How do pre-service teachers (and individuals in general) actually spend their time, on a daily basis, engaged with text as readers and writers? What implications does this have for literacy curriculum throughout the grades?

As we discussed the results for each item, we worked to become aware of and to question our own tactic assumptions about specific literacy events. Take, for example, the mean of 2.87 (slightly to moderately characteristic) for reading a menu in a typical 48 hours. Consider some of the possibilities for such a collective mean score: Perhaps our subjects (a) do not eat out, (b) eat out, but in places they frequent, and, therefore, have no need for a menu, or (c) do not consider the posted drive-through list of foods a menu (Is a menu not paper and hand-held?). We wonder about the power of the specific wording of the WORDS-R items in relation to the mind-sets that our subjects had as they responded to them. Our subjects, all student teaching, responded collectively (M = 3.32) that in a typical 48-hour period, writing directions was moderately characteristic of them. Are many really not writing directions? Or, do they mentally structure the concept "direction writing" in such a way that instructions written on the chalkboard or on a worksheet did not come to mind as written directions? Were they locked into thinking of writing street directions (etc.) instead and, therefore, respond that in a typical 48 hour period, writing directions is not something they do? Using the results of this instrument without considering such interpretations as those mentioned above could lead to simplistic, and possibly erroneous, conclusions such as reading behaviors are only slightly to moderately characteristic of the pre-service teachers in this study. Using the results as a basis for continued reflection and dialogue, on the other hand, supports developing greater understanding of literacy behaviors, readers and writers, and instrumentation.

To this point, we have discussed results related to the behavioral component of attitude as it relates to reading and writing. We will now address results for the affective and cognitive components. The results dealing with perceived enjoyment, success, and personal growth related to reading (items 6, 7, and 8 respectively) and writing (items 13, 14, and 15) were more as we would have predicted, given the informal observations of our pre-service teachers over the past several years. All three reading items had total mean scores greater than the total mean scores for equivalent writing items. There was a statistically significant difference in favor or reading for these three comparisons (See Table 2).

Table 2

WORDS-R: Writing and Reading Means and Standard Deviations for Cognitive and Affective Components

	ITEM	MEAN	*SD*
Cognitive Component			
14.	I believe the more I write, the more successful I will be.	3.59	1.28
7.	I believe that the more I read, the more successful I will be.	4.14[a]	1.17
15.	I believe that the more I write, the more I will grow personally.	3.62	1.32
8.	I believe that the more I read, the more I will grow personally.	4.18[b]	1.20
Affective Component			
13.	I enjoy writing.	3.67	1.18
6.	I enjoy reading.	4.11[c]	1.66

a = comparison of items 14 and 4: *t*=-5.64, *df*=111, p<.001
b = comparison of items 15 and 8: *t*=-5.60, *df*=111, p<.001
c = comparison of items 13 and 6: *t*=-3.44, *df*=111, p<.001

Since the total mean scores for the reading items fell within the **very characteristic of me** range and the total means for the three writing items fell within the **moderately characteristic of me** range, we need to consider carefully the pragmatic value of this statistical significance. Of clear concern is the moderately-characteristic total mean scores for the cognitive and affective components of attitude related to writing. Given these results, we would predict that many of the pre-service teachers in this study may not be disposed to teach and encourage the kinds of writing experiences in the classroom that will in turn support children in their development of positive attitudes towards writing.

Even though the total mean scores for the reading items related to the cognitive and affective components of attitude fell within the **very characteristic of** me range, further inquiry, rather than drawing conclusions, seems to be a more appropriate next step. Are favorable dispositions towards reading in the cognitive and affective components of attitude enough to ensure that teachers will provide children the kinds of reading experiences in the classroom that will support their development of positive attitudes towards reading? Do we, as literacy professionals, need to focus attention on developing the behavioral component of attitude toward reading within ourselves and our students in order to initiate cycles of fully developed (cognitively, affective AND behaviorally) positive reading attitudes? We plan to further revise WORDS-R, focusing primarily on the refinement of the behavioral component reflected in the instrument. We may then collect data on all three components of attitude that may enable us to suggest conclusions and implications with construct, statistical and pragmatic confidence.

WORDS-R: The Instrument

The development of the WORDS-R was based on a tripartite model of attitude that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. In the previous section of this paper, we identified and discussed weaknesses within the instrument related to the behavioral. In a further revision of the WORDS-R, we must work to include parallel reading and writing behaviors that may allow meaningful comparisons between attitudes towards these two literacy processes.

The WORDS-R, in its current form, was validated by correlating the scores from this instrument with the scores from the *Miculecky Behavioral Reading Attitude Measure* (MBRAM). The moderate correlation of $r=.5$ ($p<.001$) is favorable considering that the MBRAM includes only reading behavior while the WORDS-R includes both reading and writing. We will continue to apply measures of validity and reliability as we further refine the WORDS-R.

For Further Discussion . . .

Given the demands of college education, it is safe to say that preservice teachers could not survive a teacher-preparation program without the ability to read and write with some degree of proficiency. Evaluations of completed written assignments and observations of classroom discussion based on assigned readings support this declaration. We wonder, however, at the number of students in our classes (our future teachers) who comment, "I really don't like to read." "The children's literature book I read in this class was the first book that I ever enjoyed." "In my adult life, I have not read an entire book [novel].

I only read textbooks required for my classes, when I have to." "No, I'm not a writer. People who write books and articles are writers." "I hate to write." How will teachers with such attitudes adequately promote literacy development, beyond minimal pragmatic levels, and inspire appreciation and enjoyment for reading and writing in their students? What priority will such teachers give to reading and writing experiences that engage and extend their students' thinking? Is a teacher's personal proficiency in reading and writing enough to inspire in young learners a love of literacy, which is, basically, a deep appreciation for and engagement in thought-filled communication?

What do your personal beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to reading and writing show your students, colleagues, family,...? Do your attitudes support the development of positive literacy attitudes in others? Should they? We invite your use of the WORDS-R as a springboard for reflection and dialogue.

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Appendix

Writing or Reading Disposition Scale - Revised with Results by Item

STUDENT NUMBER ____________________

WORDS-R

Directions: Indicate how characteristic each statement is of you using the following scale:

---

1 = Not at all characteristic of me
2 = Slight characteristic of me
3 = Moderately characteristic of me
4= Very characteristic of me
5= Extremely characteristic of me

Please record your answers in the spaces to the left of the items.

___ 1. **In a typical 48 hour period, I read the newspaper for a total of at least an hour.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent	n = 112
1	38	33.9	
2	22	19.6	
3	22	19.6	
4	19	17.0	
5	11	9.8	

___ 2. **In a typical 48 hour period, I read a magazine.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	20	17.9
2	24	21.4
3	33	29.5
4	21	18.8
5	14	12.5

___ 3. **In a typical 48 hour period, I read a chapter of a book other than a textbook.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	33	29.5
2	26	23.2
3	26	23.2
4	11	9.8
5	16	14.3

4. **In a typical 48 hour period, I read**

___ a. **a chapter in a textbook**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	35	31.3
2	27	24.1
3	29	25.9
4	11	9.8
5	10	8.9

___ b. **a professional journal**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	37	33.0
2	26	23.2
3	29	25.9
4	18	16.1
5	2	1.8

___ c. **instructions/directions**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	15	13.4
2	6	5.4
3	22	19.6
4	32	28.6
5	37	33.0

___ d. **a recipe**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	27	24.1
2	25	22.3
3	31	27.7
4	14	12.5
5	15	13.4

___ e. **a menu**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	23	20.5
2	20	17.9
3	32	28.6
4	23	20.5
5	14	12.5

___ f. **a map**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	47	42.0
2	35	31.3
3	19	17.0
4	6	5.4
5	5	4.5

___ 5. **In a typical 48 hour period, I read aloud to someone.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	9	8.0
2	8	7.1
3	10	8.9
4	24	21.4
5	61	54.5

___ 6. **I enjoy reading.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	5	4.5
2	7	6.3
3	19	7.0
4	21	18.8
5	60	53.6

___ 7. **I believe that the more I read, the more successful I will be.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	8	7.1
2	2	1.8
3	15	13.4
4	28	25.0
5	59	52.7

___ 8. **I believe that the more I read, the more I will grow personally.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	8	7.1
2	4	3.6
3	11	9.8
4	26	23.2
5	63	56.3

___ 9. **In a typical 48 hour period, I write a letter to someone.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	35	31.3
2	34	30.4
3	31	27.7
4	9	8.0
5	3	2.7

___ 10. **In a typical 48 hour period, I write a narrative or expository piece other than an assignment.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	64	57.1
2	34	30.4
3	10	8.9
4	4	3.6
5	0	0

___ 11. **In a typical 48 hour period, I write in a diary or personal journal.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	54	48.2
2	22	19.6
3	10	8.9
4	19	17.0
5	7	6.3

12. **In a typical 48 hour period, I write**

___ a. **a list**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	1	.9
2	6	5.4
3	18	16.1
4	22	19.6
5	65	58.0

___ b. **a memo**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	9	8.0
2	9	8.0
3	19	17.0
4	23	20.5
5	52	46.4

___ c. **a phone message**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	13	11.6
2	12	10.7
3	17	15.2
4	23	20.5
5	47	42.0

___ d. **a personal reminder (note)**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	5	4.5
2	3	2.7
3	11	9.8
4	25	22.3
5	68	60.7

___ e. **directions**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	14	12.5
2	16	14.3
3	31	27.7
4	22	19.6
5	29	25.9

___ d. **an assignment**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	10	8.9
2	9	8.0
3	29	25.9
4	24	21.4
5	40	35.7

___ 13. **I enjoy writing.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	6	5.4
2	11	9.8
3	33	29.5
4	26	23.2
5	36	32.1

___ 14. **I believe the more I write, the more successful I will be.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	10	8.9
2	12	10.7
3	27	24.1
4	28	25.0
5	35	31.3

___ 15. **I believe that the more I write, the more I will grow personally.**

Scale	Frequency	Percent
1	11	9.8
2	13	11.6
3	21	18.8
4	30	26.8
5	37	33.0

Spur Revisited: Five Years After a State-Funded Reading Improvement Project, What Pieces Remain?

Glenda Lofton, Martha Head

How do you change a whole state? What are the essential elements in a successful improvement project? From 1979 to 1988, Louisiana sought to "put the pieces together" to build comprehensive reading programs in the 66 school districts in Louisiana. This study is part of a three phase research study conducted five years later to determine which "pieces" remain. Are districts and schools involved in the state-funded improvement project continuing to implement and maintain the essential elements of the project five years after the termination of state funding and external support? If so, what factors contributed to the maintenance and the institutionalization of these elements into the ongoing operation of districts and schools? If not, what factors contributed to the failure to maintain these elements? What are the implications for future improvement efforts?

Rarely have there been improvement efforts with the scope and longevity of this one. An average of 1.5 million dollars was annually invested in the project over the nine years. Did it make a difference? Too seldom in education do we take the time to reflect on what was done to see what worked, what didn't work, and why.

Perspectives/Theoretical Framework

In 1979 the Louisiana Department of Education with the support of the legislature launched a statewide reading improvement effort called

SPUR, Louisiana's *Special Plan Upgrading Reading*. Key to the conceptualization of SPUR were findings from the comprehensive Rand Study (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978) on successful change efforts which concluded that successful projects were not projects at all but part of an ongoing problem-solving and improvement process. Essential elements of this process included collaborative planning and problem-solving at all levels, ongoing staff development for all role groups with planned follow-up and support, and comprehensive change (curricular, organizational and administrative reform). The important finding was that change became more a function of people and organization than technology or finance. In an effort to build on these principles of change, eight regionally based technical assistance teams worked collaboratively with districts and schools, universities, parents and communities in implementing an ongoing improvement process. Participation was voluntary. Staff at all levels were actively involved in collaborative planning, problem solving, and decision making. Ongoing staff development at the state, regional, district and school levels was provided with planned follow-up, coaching, and support. Networking, sharing, and visitations across districts and schools were actively encouraged. As a guide for the improvement process, criteria or standards for exemplary reading programs were identified. Schools could use these criteria informally to assess needs, or they could formally pursue achievement of the criteria to seek recognition as model schools . Funds and resources at the district level were minimal; $5,000 was the maximum amount received by a district during any fiscal year. The intent was to provide local leaders with the knowledge and skills to guide an ongoing improvement process independently and to ultimately impact student achievement, providing students with the skill and the will to read.

Formal evaluations of SPUR, conducted annually by the Department of Education's Bureau of Evaluation, were concerned with documenting the efficacy and validity of the improvement process as well as the outcomes. SPUR's evaluation results, particularly a qualitative study conducted in 1983 in which external evaluators made on-site visits to six districts identified by project staff as having successfully implemented SPUR, reinforced essential elements underlying the improvement process (Hoffman, Cantwell, & Stewart, 1983).

Subsequent research in the field of change and improvement likewise seems to support the validity of the process: Samuels' (1981) characteristics of exemplary reading programs; research on self-renewing schools (Joyce, Wolf, & Calhoun, 1993); research on changing school culture through staff development (Joyce, 1990); research on staff development through coaching (Brandt, 1987); research on a school reform (Fullan, 1993a); and a recent synthesis of research on change (Fullan, 1993b).

During its nine years of existence, SPUR evaluations summarized by Lofton (1983, 1984) documented many successes: 30% fewer failures on State Basic Skills Tests despite lower SES; scores above the national average on the Prescriptive Reading Inventory with increases over time; 90% time on task in SPUR classrooms; improved attitudes/climate; increased parental/community involvement; and promotion of recreational reading (an average of 30 books per student read annually). These accomplishments brought recognition by the International Reading Association, McDonalds Corporation, the National Association of State Boards of Education and endorsements by business, industry, and labor groups in Louisiana. SPUR likewise experienced many problems, obstacles and failures including normal resistance to change, varying levels of commitment among districts and schools, severe economic difficulties, budget cuts, and ultimately its unexpected termination by a new governor in 1988 (Lofton, 1988).

Improvements occurred, but was the process of continuing improvement maintained? If the ultimate success of any improvement effort is dependent upon its institutionalization into the ongoing operation of the district or school as postulated by the Rand Study, the success of SPUR is best assessed after the funding and external support have ended.

Methods/Data Source

Maintenance of an ongoing improvement process and long-term benefits were determined through a three-phase study conducted during the 1993-94 school year, five years after the project's termination, with a grant from one of the participating universities. Phase 1 involved a survey of the participating districts and schools serving as model schools when the project ended; Phase 2 included on-site visits to six districts; and Phase 3 analyzed student achievement data in participating districts and schools. This paper focuses on Phase 2 of the study. During Phase 2, on-site visits, observations and interviews were conducted in six school districts who had participated in the qualitative study of SPUR conducted ten years previously (Hoffman, Cantwell & Stewart, 1983); these districts were originally chosen because of their initial success in adopting SPUR and because they represented a range of ways that the process could be used locally and adapted to varying contexts. Replicating methods used in the earlier study, an evaluator knowledgeable concerning the SPUR program visited each of the school systems and two former model schools within the district for a single day. At the district level, the evaluator interviewed the superintendent or a designee and other district staff involved in SPUR. Schools were arbitrarily selected based on close proximity to the central office. At the school level, data were collected through interviews with the principal and teachers as well as an informal walk through and observation of the school to determine maintenance of specific criteria. Questions, modified from original interviews to emphasize maintenance of the process, were used as probes. Comments of persons interviewed were tape recorded and compiled for each district. Responses were analyzed in light of the level of maintenance, and common themes were identified to provide insight into those factors associated with the maintenance of project elements. Differences across the six districts were also analyzed, providing a tentative understanding of SPUR's maintenance under varying conditions and related outcomes.

Results/Conclusions/Importance

Based on Phase 2 of the study, on-site visits to the six districts and two former model schools within each district, tentative conclusions have been drawn.

Are Project Elements Being Maintained at the District and School Levels?

District Maintenance. Although SPUR focused on the school as the unit of change, the district played an active role in the improvement process. Each district had a planning team that assessed strengths and needs and collaboratively developed a written plan for improvement. The plan included an emphasis on building comprehensive reading programs and ways that the district would support the schools in implementing an ongoing improvement process.

Table 1 provides a summary of each district's maintenance of an ongoing improvement process and related elements. Of the six districts once identified as successful implementors of the improvement process, Districts 1, 2, and 3, had taken specific actions to maintain and continue the improvement effort after funding and external support had ended; the support varied in type and degree with District 1 maintaining all elements; District 2, most elements; and District 3 choosing to focus primarily on one key element: systematic staff development with follow-up to ensure application of new knowledge and skills. District 4 indirectly contributed to the maintenance of the effort by placing strong instructional leaders in model schools; according to a district spokesman, "The teachers and parents in the model schools demanded it." District 5 had unintentionally impeded the process through district reorganization and consolidation of schools, and District 6 had taken no specific actions. Long-term benefits of participation in SPUR were reported, however, by all districts.

A brief description of a maintaining and non-maintaining district is provided to give insight into the effect of varying contexts on maintenance of the improvement process.

Table 1

District Maintenance of Project Elements

	Districts					
Project Elements	1	2	3	4	5	6
Emphasis on maintaining an ongoing improvement process	x	x	x			
Involvement in collaborative planning, problem-solving						
District	x	x	x			
School	x	x	x	x	x	
Ongoing staff development						
Teachers	x	x	x			
Principals	x	x	x			
District staff	x	x	x			
Follow-up, coaching, support	x		x			
District focus on principal involvement/leadership	x	x	x	x		
Involvement and support of district staff at school-level	x		x			

Networking, visitation across district and/or schools	x		x		
Designation, recognition of Model Schools	x	x			
Maintenance of criteria for exemplary instructional programs					
District	x				
School	x	x	x	x	x

District 1 not only maintained all elements but modified and refined them in light of assessment data and current research to make them more challenging. Indicative of this was the statement, "I think we've outgrown the Criteria of Excellence." Emphasis is placed on building a common knowledge base districtwide. District staff are constantly in schools mentoring, supporting, listening and responding to the needs and concerns of the schools. Internal and external reviews are conducted to maintain model schools. Teacher empowerment is viewed as the key to ongoing improvement. Risk-taking and innovation are rewarded. Teachers, as active partners in the improvement process, are encouraged to become school-based experts on a program or innovation consistent with district goals, and they are expected to demonstrate and train others. Students have become active collaborators in the improvement process, assessing and providing feedback on their own learning, and even conducting their own parent conferences. The superintendent and board of education actively support ongoing improvement and ensure that highly qualified trained personnel are in all positions.

In contrast, District 5 had taken no specific actions to continue the process. Response to state mandates, such as a state teacher evaluation system and an accompanying mentoring program for beginning teachers, had taken precedence. For certain activities such as textbook adoption, the district relied on the planning process learned in SPUR, but the process was not ongoing. Several factors at the district level seem to have unintentionally impeded maintenance of the process including consolidation from 21 to 12 schools: Chapter 1 reading specialists who had received intense training in the improvement process and served as internal technical assistants were back in traditional roles as corrective/remedial teachers, and key individuals who had supported the process retired. On-site visits to model schools within this district revealed that project elements were strongly maintained in one school and very limited in the other. Comments in the maintaining school indicate that the process and behaviors have become institutionalized, "It's just a part of us. We might abandon things briefly, but we keep coming back to them because they work." A revealing comment at the non-maintaining school was, "When we achieved model status, teachers felt we had reached the pinnacle. Teachers just shut down. Like Michael Jordan, there was no place left to go."

School Maintenance. At the school level 9 of the 12 schools visited across the 6 districts had maintained an ongoing improvement process and demonstrated growth in the areas addressed by the Criteria of Excellence, 17 standards for exemplary reading programs that had provided focus for the improvement effort. Evidence most frequently identified in interviews and most highly visible in school included the following: (a) ongoing use of the improvement process for planning and decision-making, (b) emphasis on oral and written communication as evidenced by student/student interaction and displays of students writing, (c) emphasis on recreational reading and reading stimulus projects including reading corners in classrooms and records of books read, (d) emphasis on higher level thinking, (e) accommodation of individual differences through a variety of teaching and learning activities and cooperative groups, (f) sound teaching and learning techniques, and (g) parent/community involvement. In keeping with the original goal of SPUR, the practices had become internalized into the culture and expectations of the school, although many teachers were not aware of their origin and only two of the twelve schools still provided formal emphasis on the criteria.

What Factors Facilitated/Impeded Maintenance of the Improvement Process?

A qualitative analysis of district and school data provides insight into factors facilitating and impeding maintenance.

Understanding of the Improvement Process. By its very nature, change and improvement is an abstract process. The process was maintained at the highest level where all individuals, particularly teachers, understood the purpose and importance of an ongoing improvement process and their role in it. Growth and maintenance were impeded in districts and schools where the process was perceived as a means of ensuring accountability or, as demonstrated by the non-maintaining school in District 5, where emphasis was placed on achieving model status rather than ongoing growth and improvement.

Level/types of Involvement at the District Level. There seems to be a strong relationship between the levels and types of district involvement and maintenance of an ongoing improvement process within individual schools. The level and type of involvement did not necessarily determine whether schools maintained the criteria for exemplary reading programs and got better, but it did seem to determine whether schools used the criteria as a foundation for pursuing new challenges and innovations. In District 4, for example, all schools maintained the criteria at a high level, but had not integrated current research and trends to a high degree.

Interviews and observations indicated that districts fall along a continuum with District 1 showing the highest level of maintenance and District 6 showing the lowest level. Additional support for this is found in the comments of individuals interviewed in the respective districts. According to the Concerns Based Adoption Model, there are seven stages of concern that individuals go through in adopting a change or innovation (Hord, Rutherford, Hurling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). Concerns range from a focus on self (levels 0-3, awareness, informational and personal concerns) to task (level 3, management concerns), and finally to impact (levels 4-6, consequence, collaboration and refocusing concerns). An informal analysis of teacher comments in District 1 suggests that teachers for the most part are at the highest level, level 6, the refocusing stage; teachers in District 3 are at level 5, the collaborative stage; and teachers in Districts 2 and 4 are at level 4, the consequence stage. District 5 is divided at the school level with one school maintaining at level 4, the consequence stage, and one non-maintaining school at level 0, the awareness level, indicating that teachers are no longer concerned about the improvement process as defined by SPUR. In District 6 both schools are back at level 0, the awareness level.

The predominant concern of individuals in all schools maintaining an ongoing improvement process was clearly the impact they were having on students. The fact that District 2 appeared to be at a lower level in the change process than District 3, despite the maintenance of more elements, suggests that certain elements might have more impact on individuals than others. Both districts, for example, place an emphasis on staff development; however, District 3 has placed a greater emphasis on the development of the individual through systematic and intensive follow-up, coaching, and support.

Leadership at the School Level. A surprising finding was that the improvement process continued, with or without district support, in those schools where leadership was provided either by a principal or by a core group of teachers. In one school, for example, there were only two staff members remaining who had been involved in SPUR, a teacher and the principal. The principal, a teacher in the school during the project's duration, learned that the practices worked, and continued them. In another school, a core group of teachers had maintained the improvement effort when a new, inexperienced principal was appointed. The chairperson of the school's planning team commented, "You know we have a new principal, but we like him and we're all helping him."

It is also interesting to note that growth and improvement continued in some schools despite large turnovers in staff. Traditionally staff turnover is associated with low maintenance of an improvement or innovation. In the twelve schools visited, only two schools still had the same principal and most had experienced at least a 50 percent turnover in staff. Other factors seem to determine the impact of staff turnover and reorganization. District 3, for example, saw movement of staff as an opportunity to spread the improvement process rather than an inhibitor of the process.

Collaboration at all Levels. When all role groups at the district and school level share a common knowledge base and work together as equals, the result is a community of learners and an environment in which ongoing improvement, innovation and experimentation naturally evolve. Collaboration does not mean abdication of responsibility as leaders. It does not mean an absence of clearly defined expectations or structure. In District 1, for example, expectations are clearly defined. There is a lot of structure; the key is flexibility within that structure.

Utilization/Development of Human Resources. Districts and schools that recognized, utilized, and built upon the knowledge and strengths of individuals fostered ongoing improvement. Unlike District 5 where the expertise of Chapter 1 teachers was no longer utilized, the most successful districts maximized the expertise of individuals who had received intensive training during SPUR by putting them in key leadership positions. SPUR technical assistants had been hired; principals and teachers trained in the improvement process had been promoted. In one district a SPUR principal had become superintendent.

Successful districts likewise made the development of human resources a number one priority. Staff development for leaders in District 1 was not just continued; it was intensified. A common knowledge base at the district level became the foundation and impetus for creativity and innovation. As Piaget (1972) pointed out, to understand is to invent. In these districts, informal day-to-day activities and interactions are seized upon as opportunities to help someone grow. In District 3 even the visit of the researchers collecting data for this study was used as an opportunity to recognize and reinforce the development of individuals within the district. Instructional support staff never attend a conference without taking just the right teacher along. Informal discussion and sharing groups around a common theme emerge as powerful tools for staff development.

Formal staff development activities are purposeful and clearly focused on both the needs of individuals and the goals of the district. Individuals are expected to implement and share what is learned with others. "Without this," one principal pointed out, "teachers become workshop junkies."

Teacher/Student Self-Efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy appears to be an outcome of a viable and ongoing improvement process. Teacher self-efficacy was not unique to those districts and schools maintaining the process at the highest levels, but it was most pervasive. Neither did the absence of teacher self-efficacy necessarily indicate the absence of growth and improvement. In one school, for example, instructional practices incorporated within the criteria had become institutionalized, and there was evidence of continued growth and improvement. Teachers, however, were not as enthusiastic and appeared more tentative in discussing what they did and why they did it than teachers in other maintaining schools. Conversations with staff members revealed that teachers had initially perceived the process as a means for fixing them rather than a process of ongoing growth and improvement. This was due partly to a project staff member who was subsequently replaced, but the perceptions remained. When teachers understand the nature of the process and their role in it, self-efficacy unconsciously evolves.

Teacher self-efficacy begets student self-efficacy. In District 1, for example, teachers and students are collaborating. Students are assuming responsibility and ownership for their own learning. As students understand their role in the teaching/learning process, learning is maximized and new challenges are sought. It is trite but true; teachers and students are empowered.

Perceived Benefits. When district and school staff participating in this study were asked to give reasons for maintaining the improvement process, typical responses included: "It works. It just makes sense. When something is sound, it won't go away. It's just a part of us. It's just standard operating procedure. It makes a difference for kids." For some, the response was more personal, "I am what I am because of

SPUR." The principal who had become superintendent noted, "If it had not been for SPUR, I would still be playing 'Dear Abby' in my school, responding to the latest crisis." Although most of these statements are simply stated, individuals maintaining the improvement process were characterized by a deep personal commitment to making a difference, what Fullan (1993b) describes as a moral purpose. SPUR had helped them in achieving that purpose.

Probably the best synthesis of the long-term benefits of participation in SPUR was provided by the assistant superintendent for instruction in District 1. This district's actions had not only resulted in an ongoing improvement process but had resulted in teacher and student self-efficacy, risk-taking, and innovation. The assistant superintendent stated that SPUR had been the catalyst for change in the district. Schools had achieved quality and equity as a result of the Criteria of Excellence. The criteria had served as an impetus for collaboration among district staff, principals and teachers; given the leadership, the knowledge, and the know-how for effecting change in classrooms; demonstrated the value of uniform training and follow-up; and empowered teachers. Once these essential elements (inputs) were in place, the district and schools could focus on outcomes and innovations. They were in a position to remove barriers and to restructure in pursuit of their mission to save all kids.

What are the Implications for Future Improvement Efforts?

Findings suggest that SPUR represented a viable change and improvement process that can be implemented and maintained by districts and schools with positive outcomes including an increased capacity for change as envisioned by Fullan (1993b) in his recent synthesis of research on change. Examination of trends and patterns across districts and schools indicate that maintenance, like implementation, is facilitated and impeded by many complex, interrelated and sometimes contradictory factors. Factors which seem to have particular significance for future improvement efforts have been identified.

In reviewing the history of change and reform since the 1960s, Fullan (1993b) contends that the 90's require a new mindset about change. This new mindset focuses on comprehensive reform rather than single innovations, views ongoing change and improvement as a way of life, and requires that all educators become skilled change agents, actively pursuing a greater capacity for change. If Fullan is right, this study takes on increased relevance because SPUR sought to do just that.

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Is Resistance Empowerment? Using Critical Literacy with Teachers

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Current writing in literacy, as well as educational texts in general, suggests that empowerment is a desired state for learners and their teachers. While the construct of empowerment has been treated to several passes of analysis (Clarke, 1990; Ellsworth, 1989; Lewis & Simon, 1986), we have yet to understand how teachers' authority and the rules that are implicit in their classrooms interact with agendas of empowerment that are based on critical approaches to literacy. Giroux (1987) has described Graves' approach to literacy as a critical pedagogy. Yet, its application by adult teachers in their own learning contexts is less well articulated. The following is a case study of implementing a critical literacy perspective (in both course content and course processes) in a masters' level course.

We begin with a combined description of the course and the research method. Next, we describe the ways teachers in the course reacted to it. Following that is reflexive analysis of the experience by the instructor and then by the researchers. The central focus of the paper is how empowerment and critical literacy are defined and used as teaching constructs in a college course.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project involved a group of ten teachers who were enrolled in a graduate course in the Supervision of Reading. Eight teachers commuted to this evening class from local school districts where they taught elementary and secondary students. Two of the students were not currently teaching. All teachers were married, white, and female. In the Reading program, instruction typically took the form of lectures, research papers, and semester examinations on the roles and responsibilities of reading supervisors. This course was based on two texts that dealt with a critical analysis of literacy education (Shannon's (1989) *Broken Promises*, and Willensky's (1990) *The New Literacy*). The course in which the texts were used was syllabus driven at the beginning, with readings, a written response paper, and an inservice module. Class discussion and activities occurred in a circle of desks. Jim, the instructor for the course, offered a provisional syllabus and explicitly invited the teachers' revisions.

The course also involved two participant observers, Sue and Scott. They were doctoral students in education who attended all class meetings. The two observers were enrolled in a qualitative research methods course and their observations of the reading course provided them a research context and project. In effect, this created two parallel courses operating in the same time/space. The instructor monitored his interaction with the master's students, referred to as teachers. As the study evolved, the self-analysis and transformation of the instructor became a third, simultaneous course. Gradually, the roles of the observers shifted to that of observing participants.

The observers both recorded field notes in context to capture the events of the course. They also interviewed the students, both formally and informally. The instructor and the observers spent 1-2 hours following each of the 14 course meetings in debriefing, and interpretive re-construction (Ferguson, et al., 1992) of the evening's events. Written narratives from these debriefings were also part of the data. In addition, Jim analyzed the written work of the students.

After the course, we analyzed the data (fieldnotes, audiotapes, teachers' writing) for patterns using a constant comparative method. Bogdan & Biklen (1992) refer to constant comparison as a systematic approach to simultaneously collecting and reducing data. As data is accumulated, it is compared with existing categories for its relationship. Our data analysis was also based on our threeway conversations about the course. That is, we (Scot, Susan and Jim) created data as we interpreted the events of the course. In our uses of narrative vignettes, gossip, and stories, we recreated the classroom events in our talk (Clifford, 1988; Hammersley, 1992). Constructing *data* as a research method is problematic for some readers. Yet, from our perspective, it is consistent with postmodern accounts of education which rely on more interpretive reconstructions of lived experience (Denzin, 1994).

The major finding from our analysis was that the teachers systematically resisted the use of critical theories provided in the texts by Shannon (1989) and Willensky (1990). The remainder of this paper is devoted to describing the types of teachers' resistance and the meanings the researchers and teachers ascribed to the teachers' resistance of critical theory.

Teachers' Ways of Resisting

Jim's agenda in the critical literacy course was to engage teachers in the interrogation of their literacy beliefs, teaching approaches, and schools' curricula in literacy. The teachers' refusal to do so can be seen as resistance. The teachers declined to use critical literacy approaches in their own classes. Further, they did not attempt to control the current course, and they refused to talk about it. To describe the course, we offer our interpretation of the teachers' resistance.

Accumulating a Degree

From the point of view of the researchers, the teachers talked about their degree programs as an accumulation of courses. Taking usually one, or perhaps two, courses a semester, the teachers spoke of how many more they had to go. They talked about workload, rigor required by professors, and what course assignments were like. In interviews, the teachers reported that they expected an experience similar to those they had had previous courses. When the students finished this course, they could have one more sticker to paste into the degree plan.

In conversation, however, the teachers said that the current course was *different* from previous courses. Some of the teachers said that this course was the only course in which they were required to give their opinions and reactions to readings. They were disturbed that after all the classes they had taken, why this course required something different from the others. The teachers' views of the course as a *sticker* on a record card, influenced their engagement with the course. Restructuring the course and analyzing the processes of the course were seen an unnecessary effort. When invited to resubmit written work that the instructor had returned for teachers' personal reflection, one student commented that she had already "wasted enough time doing things the wrong way." Instead, the teachers prompted the instructor to clarify *his* requirements for their work. They wanted specification of how their work should look, how it would be evaluated, and how evaluation related to grades for the course. Students' specifications for task clarity seemed to preclude their willingness to take more directive roles in re-creating the course content and structure, including issues of evaluation and distribution of grades. Of course, specification also seems reasonable when one considers the instructor's need to evaluate students' work for the course.

Comfortable with Content

The required texts for this reading course were Willensky's (1990) *The New Literacy* and Shannon's (1989) *Broken Promises*. Both texts offer critical analysis of the literacy instruction and its management provided by school contexts. In weekly reaction papers and in learning projects, the teachers demonstrated their understanding of critical analyses of literacy practices. The teachers supported the notion of engaging students in reading and writing that was seen as real, significant, and purposeful by the readers and writers. Reading and writing "in the real" (Willensky, 1990) meant that materials used by the students needed to be intrinsically meaningful, and had pragmatic relationships to outside *realities*. The teachers also expressed a preference for child centered learning over curriculum driven schooling. To the researchers, the teachers seemed to understand the concept of new literacy and appeared fluent in their discussions and writings about the premises and merits of a critical approach to reading and writing as classroom pedagogy.

Teachers also took a critical stance when examining the differences between the university definitions of literacy practice and those used in the schools. One teacher said that the use of basal reading series was considered passé at the university and that university instructors encouraged our students to be critical of teachers who continued to use the managed instruction found in basal reading series. She also told a story of how, in a different class, she too had poked fun at her teaching colleagues' use of basal readers. Working with those same peers the next day, she realized that it was her professional friends she had been criticizing. She admitted to feeling torn between fellow teachers and her university learning. The teachers consistently spoke of the difference between university training and classroom practice.

Stopping Halfway Across a Chasm

The teachers did not talk about their own teaching and classrooms in the same critical theory terms they used to discuss their readings. A separation between the critical theory of the course and the practice of the teachers remained a consistent feature of the course. We understood this separation in three different ways. First, the teachers had rather well specified expectations for the current course based on their experiences in previous coursework. This is the *sticker*. They considered the syllabus that they received as a static statement for the course.

Despite the fact that the instructor encouraged them to modify the course and the syllabus, and that they were provided with examples of possible changes, the teachers chose not to do so. In fact, they privileged the syllabus as an absolute representation for the course. The syllabus, then, defined the content and the requirements for the course.

A second way to understand the separation between the teachers' responses to readings and their responses to their own teaching is the need we all have for personal comfort. We saw the teachers drawing personal boundaries around their self-constructed roles as teachers. Once circumscribed, they were more able to articulate what lay outside the circle than what was contained within. It was equally clear that what was outside was described and objectified, but not taken in, as the following example shows. One middle school teacher invited her students to write about why they were having so much difficulty working together in groups. In our class, when she read their compositions, she admitted to being very uncomfortable in responding to the real issues and feelings in her students' writing. She was aware that this kind of real writing about real issues for purposes was what our course in critical literacy was about. Her students had written poignant vignettes which were focused on the confusion they felt about liking and disliking each other and themselves. When the teacher shared the pieces of writing in class, several of the teachers were moved to comment on the power of the writing. "I'm not a psychologist," the teacher told us. "I can't comment on them." Writing "in the real" (Willinsky, 1990), and the response it demands from the teacher were outside the circle this teacher allowed herself as a professional role.

A third way we understood the separation of practice and theory was rooted in the social construction of *appropriate* in educational contexts. In this university class and in the teachers' stories about their own classrooms, a sense of appropriateness was used as a gauge for what was permissible discourse. As a group we were hard pressed when we tried to move beyond our discomfort, to the naming of the source of discomfort in ourselves. Subjects such as racism, sex roles, and dirty words, used to represent the subjects (e.g., shit, damn) were generally not approved of as discussion topics, though they did occur. We learned this two different ways. First, as curriculum for kids, these topics and words were not appropriate. Second, as students and teacher in our university class, these topics were awkward, made us all fidgety, and embarrassed. Also, any topic that suggested conflict seemed outside the domain that was acceptable discourse for teachers. One high school teacher told us that her students were mature and had outgrown racism. Therefore, there was not need to bring it up.

Being nice, in the Shadow of the Ax

Teachers explained the boundaries of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors as way of keeping themselves out of trouble. They saw the dividing line as personal protection against external sanctions which they labelled *the ax*. The danger of the ax was made real in several stories and examples that the teachers shared. One teacher said she did not want to have parents come to school and accuse her of stepping out of bounds. Another teacher said she wouldn't talk about sex in class because most parents would not be happy about it. The teachers spoke of their fear of parents' critique of their work and the reproaches that may lead to a principal's involvement. Parents, they suggested, would sue teachers for what they considered inappropriate teacher behavior.

Principals, in turn, were seen as the ax wielders. The teachers suggested that they would lose their jobs. Or less overtly, teachers could be reassigned by their principals to a portable classroom in the back lot of the school. The principal might increase the frequency and duration of observations in classrooms, or eliminate merit increases to salary. The principals were seen as capable of harassment. The instructor and the teachers could not provide an example of when the ax had come down. But it was real for each of us.

The Myth of the Ax

The teachers provided a clear picture of how imminent and precarious the ax was in their lives as teachers, but they were unable to produce known experiences in which teachers had been fired, moved, more closely supervised, or lost merit increase as a result of inappropriate teaching content or behavior. They could not produce an actual incident where parents had come to school to do battle. Yet, they all made teaching decisions within a comfort zone circumscribed by the blade of a mythological ax.

Once we started to talk about the physical reality of the ax and its mythical status, teachers suggested that principals also contributed to the social construction of the ax as a way to control task and shape teachers' behavior. One teacher mentioned that during her evaluation with her principal, the principal opened his desk drawer, pulled out a bell shaped curve and pointed to her rank in a distribution of teachers' grade allocations. The teacher told her story to show her surprise, her fear, and her naivete that such information was kept and used. The information and its use by the principal in ways that threatened the teacher sharpened the ax for her.

We used the myth of the ax and the rituals that bring it to life to provide boundaries for *appropriate conduct*. The teachers in this class, all of us, had great respect for these boundaries and resisted opportunities for critical examination of their effects.

The Instructor's Part

Jim's own words best describe what he saw happening throughout the course. It is ironic that this study focuses so heavily on my teaching. At the onset, I suspect I planned to snare my student objects in a web, and study them in a *critical context*. Yet, the feedback from the two observers projected the teachers into a larger context, capturing me as I sought to capture the students. So the study became real for me. Most of what I learned was framed in noticeable inconsistencies and conflicts that became apparent. These are some of the many things I learned.

Social relationships are the things that we build upon in class. I monitored my relationships and its quality with each of the ten students. I also monitored who was connected at any given time in class.

Feelings are difficult for me. While I recognize that emotional states and their articulation are the base for my teaching, I find it difficult to talk with and through them. Yet, I expected my students to identify and use their own emotions in their learning in the class, and in their own classes. This discrepancy of what I want from teachers (as students) and what I can't do myself was very surprising to me. I had previously worked with reader response to literature. It seemed a logical teaching approach for a whole language classroom. But the logic is not without issues.

Learner-centered literacy is problematic for all teachers. In postmodern teaching, we are cultivating diversity of ideas, opinions, and interpretations. When teaching centers on students, then we forsake interpretive authority. Yet I remain troubled by Gilbert's (1988) critique of uncontested student response; that *individualizing* response to literature tends to favor male-centered ways of knowing and experiencing literature. Left uninterrogated, the students' racist, sexist, and classist interpretations can become teacher sanctioned learning. For me, the bottom line and my teaching focus for the master's students became awareness of our responsibility for moral and ethical interpretations of literature, and how the teachers' moral stance shaped their emotional lives in their classrooms. If certain literary themes are not OK for kids, why not? What are some options? The final surprise was students' consistent refusal to interrogate their personal beliefs.

While I encouraged diversity of opinion and interpretation, I found it difficult to accept conflict in the course. Again, Willensky's portrayal of multiple interpretations suggests that as teachers of literacy, we adopt a multiperspectival approach, encourage diversity, and use perceived difference as a teaching occasion. In our class, I often saw difference as a challenge to me. I tended to respond defensively and counter attack.

Related to my avoidance of conflict is a *be nice* attitude that permeated the class. In several instances my needs for harmony preempted discussion based on differences. I got embarrassed when sex and profanity became part of the classroom discourse. I continue to believe that using controversial topics simply for their disruptive effect may create additional tensions in the class, and that the tension itself isn't especially productive for learning. But, my squelching of such talk is often based more on my discomfort than on any theoretical critique of its productivity as a learning context.

My perceptions or constructions of my student/teachers propelled me to an embarrassed response when condoms, intercourse, and sexuality became part of the course. Conflict and negative emotions also moved me to suppress discussion. Yet, these same topics in other social situations provide me laughter, arousal, and excitement. How is it that my conceptions of teacher culture make me embarrassed? I continue to work on this potentially sexist and paternalistic representation of teachers.

For me it was an interesting experience of being mentored. I was critiqued by the student researchers who were taking coursework with me. I learned to listen to their views of class. From them, I learned about defensiveness, about an asexuality that permeates nice teacher culture, and about how we all participate together in masking and muting topics that cause discomfort because they are construed as *inappropriate*.

Overturning our applecart: Self-critique

An important aspect of our struggle to bring our research knowledge to text has been our own constant overturning and disrupting of the very knowledge we created. As subjects of our own research processes, we enjoyed decentering ourselves as knowledge-makers, a move that is characteristic of postmodern or critical research (Anderson, 1989; Resaldo, 1989). In this section we demonstrate the deconstructive tenor in our relation to our devaluation of the teachers in the master's degree program as non-critical educators.

We have described the instructor's university teaching emphasis on critical theory as set of philosophical preunderstandings that he used as an approach to teaching and as an evaluation of his students' learning. While the teachers seemed to comprehend the theory, they did not use a critical stance in their descriptions of their public school work. Nor did they use a critical approach to their participation in Jim's course. Consequently, we depict this group of women falling short of the intellectual and political standards set for the course. And in *falling short* of our implicit benchmark, they are portrayed as less than. By our estimation, they were poor critical theorists. We further implied that they were unable to make a conceptual link between the pragmatics of nurturing in a world of children and the abstraction of higher education.

Our depiction is problematic. It privileges the university and its priorities on abstract thought over the daily, socially-based understandings of teachers in their public school work. Further, suggesting that little or no abstract analysis occurs on public school sites is itself elitist. While we distanced the course from other top-down university courses in both its rhetoric and its readings, the instructor and the observers retained a stance of valuing university-type knowledge over public school knowledge. There is irony here. The instructor created a university course that presupposed teachers should approach their own learning from an empowered position that breaks down the hegemony of *being taught down to*. Then in our understanding of that course, the researchers impose the same hegemony.

This critique can be enriched by adding the issue of gender to the mix. We viewed ourselves as supportive of feminist perspectives on education and social analysis. Yet, our construction of gender roles and expectations without our research trio tilted our interpretations of the group of ten women teachers, and devalued their participation in sexist ways. Within our research trio, Jim and Scot both admired Sue for her outspoken and abrasive style of thinking and interaction. We agreed that Sue's style contested the common professional norms of *appropriate* female behavior and discourse for elementary teachers. Her provocative words and arguments from a radical child advocacy stance often left the teachers wide-eyed and red-faced. Gradually, Jim and Scot constructed Sue as the ideal feminist, a radicalized benchmark for the teachers. The relatively mild mannered teachers seemed to fall short (again), this time in contrast to our construction of the *super feminist*.

In our constructions of *difference-based* social realities, the three of us *othered* the teachers. We pushed them to the margins of our critical context based on a diagnosis of *lacking in critical fibre*. We had theorized ourselves into the very predicament we so passionately wanted the teachers to confront in their own educational work. We understand that this is what we did. We do not understand how *teaching* with an agenda (of any sort) can avoid this paradox of empowerment.

Learning is Engagement

In our discussions, we found that we counted as learning those occasions where the participants were engaged in the context. These occasions were characterized by a sense of *with-it-ness*. In engaged situations, the context focus was on issues that the participants agreed were important. The interaction was typically permeated with affect. Lyons (1983) suggests that within such an engagement epistemology, knowledge creates the intimate connections between persons. Students and teachers may work on cognitive and skills-based academic tasks. Yet, they meet also on a shared affective and morally constructed plane. One can view the construction of relationship as an alternate teaching reality that occurs in the context of academic space. We felt that such a view provided for social engagement and with it a moral, ethical dimension.

From a literacy content perspective, engagement was a primary component of the new literacy philosophy of the course. In reading texts as a classroom practice, it is the interpretation of the meanings, at all levels and from multiple perspectives that is the valued outcome of pedagogy (Willensky, 1990). Similarly, in writing, it is the use of students' innermost beliefs as an occasion for literacy that is the dynamo that drives the writing process (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1991; Graves, 1983). It is clear that teachers' empathic response and connectedness with students' emotional lives take on important roles in the new literacy.

Teachers' involvement in the personal lives of their students is problematic. Gilbert (1988) and Long (1987) remind us that textual and social interpretations, however well they are intentioned, may reproduce the hegemonies that they potentially serve to deconstruct. We thought this was especially possible in elementary classrooms where students live with a single adult for a great deal of time. If implicit cultural valuing (or even explicit) is not unpacked when that occurs as part of the stories or as part of the interpretations, then social inequalities such as classism, racism, and heterosexism, go unexamined and are essentially reproduced as part of the story interpretation. In the current power relationships of classrooms, teachers own some of the responsibility for reproducing these social inequities.

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Vocabulary Development as Knowledge of Word

Tom Estes

In teaching a seventh grade science class on the topic of physical and chemical change, I opened with an exploration of two words, *physical* and *chemical*. I wanted to create a conceptual distinction between these different kinds of changes. I wrote on the chalkboard the word *physic* (a word derived in meaning from *nature*) and asked the students if they knew of other words in which we might find this word embedded in some form. To get at the basic concept of what we call physical, I offhandedly asked, looking at the word I had written, "Does anyone know how to spell *physician*?" The response was practically touching in its innocence: "Oh, gosh, we had that word last week." They meant, of course, that it was a spelling word memorized for last Friday. But today not one child was confident of the spelling of the word. They had memorized its spelling, but they did not know how to spell it. They may have spelled it correctly on Friday's test, but now they did not know HOW the word was spelled. They did not have the slightest notion of how the spelling and the meaning of the word are connected, no idea of the intersection of meanings shared by words like physics, physician, physique, and physical, connections that are apparent in the spelling of all these words.

I tell this story to illustrate the central concern of a research project I have undertaken this year. The content of the curriculum is conveyed in the printed and spoken language of textbooks and teacher explanations. The irony is that learners need to understand the language of a subject in order to advance in their understanding of the subject, but to understand the language they must have some understanding of the subject. Teachers and texts speak to learners in a language of a discipline (Olson, 1977), but rarely speak to learners about that language. The key to untying this Gordian knot is to help learners understand the intersections between what they already know about the language they use every day and the use of language in a specialized content like science, social studies, or mathematics. If understanding of a subject depends on understanding the language in which that subject is expressed, then part of teaching must always be given over to an exploration of how language works to convey the concepts of the subject (Konopak, 1991).

A Model for Vocabulary and Concept Development

Principle 1: **The principle of system. Language, particularly in its denotative function, is non-arbitrary and metaphoric—words are tools for communicating about things unfamiliar in terms connected to things familiar.**

The study of any subject, in school or otherwise, is an exploration of a way of knowing and thinking about the topics that comprise the subject, along with the language in which that way of knowing and thinking is expressed. A major issue in teaching hinges on the relationship between concepts and vocabulary, between ideas and the language in which those ideas are expressed. Words do not arbitrarily label ideas, concepts, or things as would be the case if words were like numbers used as designations. Fortunately, words in English amount to a system that mirrors the connections among ideas, concepts, and things in human understanding.

This proposition might effectively be illustrated by asking you to stretch your imagination. Imagine that on one great wall we could place all of human knowledge, illustrating that knowledge is a virtually infinite set of connected concepts. Now imagine an opposite wall on which all the words of English are written, not at random or in lists, but in a manner that would display the conceptual structure of language. So, our words physics and physician and physique and physical would be together and located not far from other words related to the concept of existence. My claim is that the two walls mirror one another.

Principle 2: **The principle of incidence. Vocabulary is naturally and incidentally acquired as a means for the expression of understandings.**

People generally acquire only those words that are necessary to the expression of ideas they understand and care about. Understandings generally precede language; language in the absence of understandings is difficult or impossible to retain. Thus, as a general rule, the vocabulary a person learns will serve the person for manipulating, refining, and making general use of concepts and understandings already acquired in a prelinguistic, intuitive form. Since vocabulary is a conventional and social phenomenon, it is usually acquired in conversation with someone else who cares about and understands the same thing or by exposure to ideas in print or other media.

Every person can probably name a new word they've heard or seen in print in the last six months. The strange thing is how often this new word will crop up again following its first encounter, as if now that one knows the word, others are catching on to it as well! The principle of incidence suggests that the word will only reappear if it suited the person who found it useful to express an idea or concept already known. (It would be fairly easy to empirically test this suggestion.)

Principle 3: **The principle of conceptualization. Teaching vocabulary is a matter of helping learners move simultaneously to greater sophistication in their understanding of concepts and their understanding of language.**

To understand a subject is to gain access to the concepts, ideas, theories, models, and laws of which the subject is constituted. These components of a subject, however, are for the most part embedded in language that is at once particular and general—particular in that the components are tied to the subject, general in that those same components are connected by simile, analogy, and metaphor to the whole of language. Insights related to the connections between specific concepts and ordinary language are the building blocks of understandings.

Each of these principles is related to the fact that every subject studied in school is more than a body of arbitrary facts. The academic disciplines are also ways of thinking about the world. Each of the disciplines and subject areas of school is the product of a conversation that has been going on for a long time. This is a conversation in which fine distinctions are created. It is helpful also to remember that the conversation is conducted in words that do not merely label things, but label distinctions among things. Thus, each of the subject areas of the curriculum is grounded in a particular way of viewing, interpreting, and describing the world. Each generates a way of talking about the world, a particular conversation embedded in a general conversation, a special language embedded in ordinary language.

My purpose now is to embed this model in the reality of the language that students encounter in the course of their schooling. The research I have undertaken is grounded in a theory of connectionism that envisages knowledge as a vast network of interconnected elements (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). On the surface, those elements are words, but on close inspection individual words prove meaningless. This is the reason that dictionary definitions and glossary entries seem so abstract in the absence of appropriate discussion of how words are used and how they fit into the linguistic and conceptual context that are their homes. The meanings of words lie in connections, but in the absence of familiarity with how these connections are made, learners have little chance of remembering what they are asked to learn. They may memorize the spelling of physician but not know why it is spelled as it is or how the spelling relates to the fact that they go to a doctor for a physical exam. As Rumelhart once put it, "all the knowledge is in the connections" (1989, p. 135). My goal is to provide a tool for learners that helps them to understand the concepts they study because they understand the connections, and not merely the definitions of words, by which those concepts are expressed.

States of Knowledge of Language

Consider how children learn to read, or, more precisely, what they must know before they can become very sophisticated in the use of language in reading and writing. At a moment of seeming magic in the acquisition of literacy, there dawns in the learner an awareness that the discrete sounds of words in speech are represented in print by letters. Soon, this awareness extends to the insight that the sound heard first in a spoken word is a clue to the initial letter of the word in print, and vice-versa. (Thus, *bump* is at first spelled by virtually all children as "b" and not "m" or "p" or any other random letter.)

This is the genesis of the first great insight for literacy that all readers must get. It is called the **Alphabetic Principle: The letters of print represent the sounds of spoken language.** The study of this phenomenon in linguistics is called phonetics. The same thing in teaching is called phonics.

In its more sophisticated form, the alphabetic principle holds that print is more stable than sound and so variations in sound do not necessarily signal variations in print. For example, consider dialectal differences in speech that do not usually show up in print, authors like Mark Twain and Joel Chandler Harris notwithstanding. Aside from dialect, and much more important to note, the English language is full of words like *sign* and *signal* that share many letters in common but are different in sound. The sameness in print preserves the kinship of meaning shared by words like these and illustrates a critical fact articulated by Richard Venesky (1967): "[English] orthography is not merely a letter-to-sound system riddled with imperfections, but, instead, a more complex and more regular relationship wherein phoneme and morpheme share leading roles". (p. 76)

This is the genesis of the second great insight for literacy, one *not* attained completely by many language users, which is the **Allomorphic Principle**[1]**: The writing system of English preserves meaning across variations in form, differences in the sounds and the spelling of words**. The study of this phenomenon in linguistics is called morphophonemics. We have no name for it in teaching, probably because it is not given its due attention in teaching. My contention is that insight into morphemics is the key to deeper understandings of the system of the language children must struggle so hard to learn. Most of the struggle derives, I believe, from a failure to realize that there is a system to language, a reason why English orthography is like it is. In print and speech alike, sound and meaning are expressed in concert with one another.

Instructional Implications

What would this imply for teaching? How might these principles change the way we interact with students regarding the various topics of the curriculum?

It most certainly would not look like 20 words a week memorized for a test on Friday. The system I refer to must be understood, but there's nothing about it to memorize. My plea to anyone wishing to teach vocabulary is to do everything possible to substitute understanding for memorization—understanding of system must become a substitute for memorization of form. But, again, what would that imply for teaching?

In part it would look like this: Where before the instructional conversation may have centered on ideas and information in the language of a topic, that same conversation should also include discussion about the language in which ideas and information are expressed. The plan for teaching that honored the principles of system, incidence, and conceptualization would include plans for teaching the vocabulary in which ideas and information are expressed. A few examples from several such plans, in this case for middle school students, will bring this suggestion into clearer focus. What I describe here is not a whole instructional conversation, but parts of several conversations about language in which the major concepts of the lessons were expressed.

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[1] from *allos* meaning *other* and *morph* meaning *form*.

The first step in planning for teaching is always to identify those major concepts, the two or three ideas that underlie the lesson. Look closely at why those ideas are expressed as they are. That is, ask "Why are these the words we use to talk about these concepts?" The teacher must become a student of language, and invite students to participate in exploring how language works. We label things and ideas as we do in order to express their relationship to other things and ideas.

Two examples will be used to make this point. In teaching a lesson on the city of Williamsburg, Virginia, early capital of the colonies, I worked two concepts into the conversation—the name, Williamsburg, and the word, capital. I began by pointing out the obvious—the city was named for William, King of England at the time Williamsburg was founded. But, I asked, why is *burg* attached to the name? What other cities have names that end in the same way? A few examples were offered, like Petersburg, Virginia; Martinsburg, West Virginia; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which the students did associate with its namesake, William Pitt. In this context I mentioned that the root meaning of the word burg is to hide or protect. (The same root is seen in words like iceberg, burglary, and bury.) But how does a city hide or protect? It was easy for the students to see that a city is a burg in the sense that if offers protection and safety to its citizens. The students even recalled that some ancient and medieval cities had walls around them for protection.

The meaning of the word *capital* was even easier to bring to light. The students were delighted with all the ways in which the root morpheme of this word comes up in English. The morpheme *cap*, meaning head, is derived from *kaput* and shows up in modern English in various forms: cadet, capital, caprice, captain, cattle, chapter, chief, biceps, decapitate, kerchief, mischief, all containing the same morpheme, sometimes distinctly so, sometimes not so distinctly.

In a lesson on the Middle Ages, and particularly the period of the crusades, I chose the concepts *middle* and *crusade* for discussion. I asked the students what they thought might be meant by the phrase, Middle Ages. Middle of what? What does it mean to say of anything that it's in the middle? I asked for any uses of the word, thinking they would immediately say "middle school." The first thing they said was "middle aged." Then middle school, middle child, Middle East, middle ear, middle man, and (I offered) middling and amid. Then I pointed out that *mid* is sometimes spelled *med*, although it is the same root. Words like medieval, median, medium, and mediocre were brought up. The most interesting was Mediterranean, the name of the sea between two continents—a sea between the lands. Someone recalled *terra* as connected to the concept of land or earth, and so *in the middle of the land* came easily. But what about Middle Ages? Did we forget the point of the lesson? On the contrary, we now had all we needed to clarify why this time period of about a thousand years is referred to as it is—because it was between two other times we call ancient (ending with the fall of Rome) and modern (beginning with the Renaissance.)

Crusade was much easier. I began with *ade*, as meaning "furnished with." The students thought of lemonade, Kool Ade, and orangeade. All are flavored drinks furnished with sweeteners. The word element *crus* means cross, and those who marched on the crusades went to furnish the cross to those they considered infidels.

Lessons that have conversations like these integrated into them focus attention on information and the language in which information is expressed. Thus part of the answer to the question, "What should school teach?" is to say, "Teach students to participate in the great conversations that have defined what it means to be educated." Teach them the joy of language in which distinctions of thought are reflected. Teach so that vocabulary development is deliberately planned to occur incidentally.

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Pieces of the Puzzle: Putting Reading and Writing Together

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For many years, educators have theorized that reading and writing involve similar processes. Squire (1983) explained that the processes are similar before, during, and after reading or writing. Setting a purpose, activating existing knowledge, and determining a point of view occur before both reading and writing. During reading and writing, there is active emotional and intellectual engagement. After reading and writing, the processes of evaluating, analyzing, and applying are used. Tierney and Pearson (1983) also proposed a decade ago that good readers and writers plan before, compose during, and revise after reading and writing. Since that time, research has continued to shed new light on how these processes develop.

Because reading and writing appear to be two sides of the same process (Squire, 1983), some educators advocate teaching reading and writing together (Cooper, 1993). According to Cooper (1993), reading and writing should be taught together because they (a) are both constructive processes, (b) share similar processes and kinds of knowledge, (c) improve achievement, (d) foster communication, and (e) lead to outcomes not attributable to either process alone.

In recent years, many programs that teach reading and writing together have been established, but few have been evaluated. The purpose of this article is to describe a school-wide reading/writing program that has been in existence for three years, to share findings of a recent evaluation of the program, and to discuss implications for teachers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The reading/writing program in this small, rural school in Weiner, Arkansas is an outgrowth of a program developed by Patricia Hesse and implemented in her classroom for several years. This teacher trained other teachers in the school and supervised the implementation of the program in grades 1-6. She received the Christa McAuliffe Fellowship and used the award to purchase computers and develop a publishing center during the second year of the school-wide program.

To provide a better understanding of the reading/writing program, a description of daily classroom activities is presented. During the first hour of each day, all students are involved in writing. The writing block is divided between Writing Time, which involves quiet activities, and Conference Time, which tends to be noisier as students interact with each other. Each student has a Writing Booklet, fashioned after a model in *The Beginning of Writing* by Temple, Nathan, Burris, and Temple (1988), that serves as a guide for students.

Writing Time

During the first 30 minutes of the writing block, students refer to the Writing Booklet and choose one of the following activities listed on the sheet entitled Things I Can Do During Writing Time.

1. I can add to my topic list.
2. I can brainstorm a new topic.
3. I can begin a new draft.
4. I can read my drafts and decide which one I want to publish.
5. I can improve or add to a draft I have started.
6. I can underline misspelled words.
7. I can look for words that should be capitalized.
8. I can draw pictures for one of my drafts.

Conference Time

The second 30-minute segment of the writing block is called Conference Time. Again, students refer to a page in the Writing Booklet for suggested activities. The following activities are listed on the page entitled Things I Can Do During Conference Time.

1. I can do anything from my Writing Time list.
2. I can hold a conference with a friend.
3. I can write at a friend's desk or at a place we find comfortable.
4. I can draw some pictures for a friend's draft.
5. I can hold a conference with my teacher.

Publishing Journey

Many students are involved in taking a draft through the publishing journey during Writing Time and Conference Time. Items 5-8 on the Writing Time list and items 2-5 on the Conference Time list above refer to activities that occur along the publishing journey (see Figure 1).

Name ______________________ Date ______________________

1. Choose a draft you would like to publish.
2. Read your draft to a friend. Use your conference guidelines.
3. Work on the draft if you need to. Add some information, or move words around.
4. Put your draft in CONFERENCE BOX 1.
5. Try editing your draft by yourself using the PROOFREADING CHECKLIST.
6. Put your draft in CONFERENCE BOX 2.

   (We will look at your editing and talk about a new skill you may need to use.)
7. Work on editing your story for final publication.
8. Put your draft in our TO BE PUBLISHED BOX.

Figure 1. Publishing Journey

The publishing journey begins when a student selects a draft for publication. The next step is a conference with a peer. In order to prepare students for conferences at the beginning of the school year, teachers explain the roles and responsibilities of both student author and peer. In addition, they model acceptable and unacceptable conferencing behavior. Conference guidelines in the Writing Booklet outline the following procedures. The student author begins by reading the piece to the peer while the peer listens for strengths. Then the peer tells what he or she liked about the draft. Next the student author rereads the piece aloud while the peer listens for areas that need improvement. Finally, the peer writes questions and suggestions on self-adhesive notes and affixes them in appropriate places on the draft. The student author considers the peer's input and revises the text by changing words, making insertions and deletions, and rearranging sentences and paragraphs to make the message clearer. (Drafts are written on continuous feed computer paper with alternating green and white lines. Students draft on the white lines and use the green lines for revisions.)

The next step along the publishing journey is a student/teacher conference to discuss the content of the revised draft. (When Hesse conducted training sessions for teachers at the beginning of the school-wide program, student/teacher conferences were modeled and teachers were engaged in playing both roles.) Figure 2 presents sample conference questions given to teachers for use as needed.

Introductory Questions

- Tell me about your piece of writing.
- Why did you choose this subject to write about?
- What surprises you most about this draft?
- What questions did your conference partner have?

Questions That Deal With Meaning

- Do you have more than one story here?
- Underline the part that tells what your draft is about.
- What is the most important thing you are trying to say here?
- Explain how your title fits your draft.

Questions That Deal With Authority

- This part isn't clear to me. Can you tell what you mean?
- Can you tell me more about this?

Questions That Deal With Voice

- How does this draft sound when you read it aloud?
- Circle the part that is most exciting.

Questions That Deal With Development

- Do you have enough information?
- Can you tell me where you are going in your draft?

Questions That Deal With Design

- How does the beginning of your piece grab your reader's attention?
- How have you tied your ending to your beginning?

Questions That Deal With Clarity

- Can you be more specific here?
- Can you think of a different way to say this?

Questions That Help a Writer Move On

- What do you intend to do now?
- What can you do to make your draft better?

Questions That Help Children See Their Growth

- How are you a better writer now than you were at the beginning of the year?
- Can you think of something new you tried in this draft that you have never tried before?

Figure 2. Student/Teacher Conference Questions

After the student/teacher conference, the student may make further revisions in content before editing the draft. When editing, students mark changes with red pens provided by the teacher. A proofreading checklist in the Writing Booklet reminds students to check the following:

1. Did I spell all words correctly?
2. Did I write each sentence as a complete thought?
3. Do I have any run-on sentences?
4. Did I end each sentence with correct punctuation?
5. Did I begin each sentence with a capital letter?
6. Did I use capital letters correctly in other places?

Students are expected to correct only those errors within their ability levels, so the teacher may teach a mini-lesson on a needed skill during the student/teacher conference. The student then applies the skill in the final editing. The final draft is edited by an adult (teacher, parent volunteer, or aide) who corrects errors in mechanics that are above the child's ability level. While students' language is retained, they learn that in the world of publishing even the best authors have editors.

The student author, a parent volunteer, or an aide may type the final draft on a computer. The Apple Works word processing program is used with Apple II E computers, and all stories are kept on a storage disk for easy access. After the final draft is printed, the student author or a classmate illustrates selected pages to convey the main idea of each page. Finally, covers are illustrated and laminated, and plastic binding is put on the book.

Books are read to others in the school and are placed in the school library. In an awards ceremony at the end of the school year, all students in the school receive certificates acknowledging them as authors. Many students receive medals for meritorious stories or outstanding illustrations.

EVALUATION OF THE READING/WRITING PROGRAM

During the third year of the reading/writing program, we evaluated the program described above. Our purposes were to determine how students (a) performed on a criterion-referenced test of basic reading skills; (b) used language arts skills required by the state in their writing; and (c) felt about reading. We felt our research should address these areas, because they were concerns expressed by teachers in the program.

During the three years under study, the Arkansas Department of Education changed achievement tests, but the state-mandated Minimum Performance Text (MPT) was administered each year. The MPT uses a multiple-choice format to assess student performance in word recognition (prefixes, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms, context clues, etc.) and comprehension (main idea, details, sequence, predicting outcomes, cause/effect, etc.) It is required of all third and sixth graders in the state.

When MPT scores were obtained for all third grade classes and all sixth grade classes over the three years of the school-wide reading/writing program, we found that students had generally met the expectation of the Arkansas Department of Education that 85% of the students show mastery of the skills tested on the MPT. In the third grade classes, 85% or more of the students showed mastery of 16 of the 19 skills at the end of the first year of the program, 13 of 19 the second year, and 18 of 19 the third year. Over the same period, at least 85% of the sixth graders mastered 12 of 15 skills the first year, 8 of 15 the second year, and 14 of 15 the third year. Skills not mastered at the end of the third year were suffixes at the third grade level and inferences at the sixth grade level.

To determine the extent to which language arts skills required by the state had been learned and could be applied by students in their writing, we evaluated writing samples of selected third graders and sixth graders over a six-month period during the third year of the program. Three boys and three girls in each grade mentioned above were identified using percentile ranks on the total reading section of the Stanford Achievement Text, 8th Edition which was administered in the spring of the previous school year. We selected one boy and one girl from each grade above who had obtained a percentile rank in the 90s on the total reading section of the Stanford 8, one boy and one girl with a reading percentile rank in the 50s, and one boy and one girl with a reading percentile rank in the 30s. These twelve students were similar in socioeconomic background, ethnicity, and race. The six third graders were in the same class, and the six sixth graders were in the same class.

During the three years of the program, teachers were expected to teach language arts skills listed by grade in a publication distributed by the Arkansas Department of Education. Skills are classified by level (basic, developmental, and extension) under the headings of capitalization, punctuation, usage, literature, and composition. For this study, we selected nine skills from the third grade language arts skills list and nine skills from the sixth grade list that we thought would be evident in student writing. Skills were selected from each category on the state list. At the third grade level, we selected the following: (a) capitalize days, months and holidays; (b) capitalize cities, towns, states, and countries; (c) place a period after a telling sentence; (d) place a question mark after a question; (e) form plurals by adding s; (f) arrange events in sequential order; (g) select an appropriate title for a story; (h) choose words to express a character's feelings; and (i) write three basic types of sentences. For sixth grade, the following skills were assessed: (a) capitalize the first word of a sentence; (b) use a comma to separate words in series; (c) use an apostrophe in a contraction; (d) form plurals of regular and irregular nouns; (e) write the possessive form of singular and plural nouns; (f) select the predicate that agrees with the subject in number; (g) arrange in chronological order the introduction, development, and conclusion of a story (plot); (h) identify character traits (appearance, personality); and (i) identify the setting of a short story using dated events, place names, and vocabulary.

Writing samples were collected from the identified students after they revised and edited their own work but before they received input from peers or the teacher. The papers were read and each of the above skills was rated from 1-5, depending on the frequency with which the skill was used correctly in the sample. A rating of five was given if the student always used the skill correctly. A rating of one meant that the student had opportunities to use the skill in the piece, but he or she never used the skill correctly. N/A was given if there was no opportunity to use the skill in the paper. We found that the six third graders and the six sixth graders either always or almost always used the selected skills correctly. Within each of these grades, we found little difference among the three achievement levels or between sexes in the application of the selected skills.

In addition to assessing knowledge and skills, the researchers felt it was important to determine the impact of such an extensive writing program on students' attitudes toward reading. Near the end of the third year of the program, the first author of this article administered the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) to all third and sixth graders in the school. This instrument consists of 20 statements about reading, followed by four pictures of Garfield. The pictures show a range of emotions, from very happy to very upset. The score on the first 10 items indicates attitude toward recreational reading, while the score on the second 10 indicates attitude toward academic reading. A composite score may also be obtained. The 40 third graders scored at the 45th percentile in recreational reading, the 36th percentile in academic reading, and the 34th percentile overall. Scores for the 39 sixth graders were as follows: recreational reading at the 51st percentile, academic reading at the 54th percentile, and a composite score at the 52nd percentile.

IMPLICATIONS

From the MPT scores, the researchers made several inferences. First, we felt students had learned the skills identified by the state department of education as being essential. Further, the scores seemed to support Squire's (1983) notion that comprehending and composing are two sides of the same coin; only one comprehension score (inferences) was below the expected mark in the third year. Another interesting observation was made from the third grade scores. These students had participated in the writing program since starting first grade, and they showed mastery of all but one word recognition skill at the end of the third year. These figures on word recognition seemed to provide support for teaching skills in a context that is meaningful to the learner and for integrating reading and writing instruction as well.

The evaluation of the author-edited writing samples gave further support to the merit of integrating reading and writing. Students had generally moved beyond the basic skills and developmental skills on the state department list. They were operating on the extension level! For example, students' papers indicated they could perform extension-level activities such as editing and correcting personal work for capitalization errors, writing and correctly punctuating dialogue between two persons, and correcting run-on sentences. This finding suggests that students can achieve at higher levels when provided with opportunities to go beyond drill and practice.

The scores on the reading attitude survey were encouraging but puzzling. Based on our experiences, attitude toward reading is generally more positive in the primary grades than in the intermediate grades, but third graders in this study had more negative attitudes toward reading than did sixth graders. The sixth graders may have been more skilled at selecting the response that would be viewed as positive.

CONCLUSION

A reading/writing program such as the one at Weiner Elementary School can enhance reading/language arts skills of students. Often teachers in states that require the teaching of specific skills fear skills will not be learned without extensive use of isolated skill instruction and practice. Knowledge that skills do not suffer when writing is emphasized should make teachers feel more secure in moving away from workbooks and ditto sheets. From our experience with this reading/writing program, we are convinced that reading and writing do involve similar processes and that there are many benefits to an integrated program.

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Literature Study Groups in Reading Education

Janet A. Miller

"I enjoyed talking to fellow teachers about how to use *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* in the classroom."

"The hardest part of the group was not giving away what was going to happen to those who had not yet completed the book."

"It was interesting to share my feelings with others in my group. We had a lot of the same responses."

"I loved *Good Night Mr. Tom.*"

These comments resulted from experiences of graduate students with literature study groups in a graduate reading methods course. While elementary and secondary teachers have been using literature study groups as part of literature based reading instruction for several years, (Cherland, 1992; Gilles, 1989; Kelly, 1990; Knipping & Andre, 1988; Strickland, Dillon, Funkhouse, Glick, & Rogers, 1989; Watson & Davis, 1988) they are also being used at the university level as a means of modeling various teaching strategies (Wells, 1990). In this article, I will discuss literature study groups, describe how I use them at the university level, and share student reactions as well as my own conclusions about the value of such groups in reading teacher education.

Literature study groups, or literature response groups as they are sometimes called, provide opportunities for students to read and respond to selected pieces of literature. The groups may be organized in a variety of ways and the purpose or focus may change from time to time, but they are typically a group endeavor that uses literature as a focus for study. Most of the literature study groups described in the professional literature have several common characteristics: (a) They involve reading, sharing, questioning, planning and record keeping; (b) Teachers often begin by structuring the groups and gradually turn over more and more control to the students so that the groups can function independently of the teacher.

Literature discussion groups are not necessarily a new idea. In the 1950s and 1960s Veatch (1966) and Barbe (1975) encouraged teachers to use literature discussion groups as part of individualized programs. In addition the Great Books Clubs which were developed by Mortimer Adler and his colleagues featured literature study groups (Pankiewicz, 1993). More recently well known reading professionals (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Harste & Short, 1991; Raphael, et al., 1992; Routman, 1991) have provided theoretical and practical information about literature study groups which has helped teachers incorporate them into their whole language or literature-based reading programs.

Current proponents of literature study groups in elementary and secondary classrooms believe that students benefit in several ways when teachers incorporate such groups in their literacy program. First, students are engaged in reading material generally classified as literature as opposed to textbook material. Literature, which is written for enjoyment as opposed to texts which are written and organized for teaching children, is designed to "create a mood, convey a theme or share an exciting plot without considering the reading skills that might be required or encouraged by reading the material" (Wiseman, 1992, p. 24). As a result it has more potential to challenge the intellect, stir the emotions and encourage reflection. Watson and Davis (1988) stress the importance of both extensive and intensive reading of literature in a reading program and argue that trivilized texts or basal readers may not "meet the cognitive-linguistic needs" of developing readers (pp. 64-65).

Second, in addition to the opportunity for students to experience literature or authentic materials as they are often called, literature study groups highlight the significance of individual response to text. Language arts teachers today are likely to be aware of reader response theory which has according to Nelms (1988) shifted the attention of language arts teachers today "to readers" responses, to the act of reading, and to the *text* in the reader's head" (p. 6). But response is when "we begin to articulate our feelings, ideas, and judgments about a piece of literature," when it begins to take another shape (p. 7).

The focus is still on the interaction of text and reader, but the emphasis moves from the text itself to the reader.

The relation between text and reader lies at the heart of reading as transaction, which may well be the underlying belief of many of the teachers who use literature study groups. In the reading transaction, according to Rosenblatt (1991) "the words of the text may be said to activate elements of memory, to stir up the organismic state linked to the words and their referen" (p. 119). The *evocation of meaning from the text* then requires a *sorting-out activity* or *choosing activity* which is *central to thinking, and hence central to reading*. Reading is "a form of thinking in transaction with a text" (p. 119). Teachers who use literature study groups provide students with the opportunity to realize that meaning is not necessarily located in the text but comes "during the transaction between the reader and the text" (p. 116).

Probst (1988), who also views reading as transaction, believes that group discussions about literature may help students come to understand that different kinds of meaning emerge from reading a text. Group discussions may trigger private and personal memories, ideas and thoughts, reflections upon own experiences, relationships, knowledge of self. Or they might lead to reflection and possibly knowledge about another person. "Discussion of the text" in literature study groups, "should reveal different responses, different senses of the work that might awaken readers to the uniqueness of others in their class" (Probst, 1988, p. 25). Such discussion "that invites students to share their readings—the feelings aroused, the thoughts and ideas suggested, the interpretations proposed, the judgments offered—will inevitably reveal differences and similarities among the readers." He believes that this "socializing effect, the understanding of one another, is surely one of the valid objectives for instruction in literature" (p. 25).

Indeed, the interaction with other students is a significant benefit of participating in literature study groups. Harste and Short (1991) who call such groups Literature Circles, claim that "talking about a piece of literature with others gives readers time to explore half-formed ideas, to expand their understandings of literature . . . and to become readers who think critically and deeply about what they read" (p. 191). In addition, Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) believe literature circles can facilitate reading and writing as social events and enhance intellectual development. Group discussions about books where children have the opportunity to say something to fellow readers about what they are reading and about what they "make of their reading up to that point," (Woodward & Burke, 1984, p. 214) can help children connect new ideas to prior knowledge and integrate understandings.

A number of reading educators have reported on the specific ways literature study groups are being used in elementary and secondary schools. Watson and Davis (1988) describe a fifth grade classroom program that involved "real literature for children, high level thinking about the literature, and readers meeting together in small groups to talk and think about what they are reading" (p. 60). They concluded that working with the children in the program taught them that reading is both a "personal and a social activity" (p. 65). Children, they argue, "must have time to read silently, personally" as well as "the opportunity to talk with others about books . . . Through confrontations with ideas, formation, and perspectives other than their own, members of the group are challenged and grow" (p. 65).

Knipping and Andre (1988) reported on a first grade classroom where the teacher wanted to use literature study groups to find ways to help children become engaged with literature and then to share the ways that the literature touched them. The teachers found that "young children could respond critically to literature" and that their responses indicated "a greater intensity of emotion and depth of thought than we had anticipated" (pp. 76-77).

Keegan and Shrake (1991) used literature study groups as an alternative to ability grouping. They established four heterogeneous groups which met three times a week to discuss a particular novel. Using a tape recorder, open ended and other types of teacher developed questions which dealt with content, reading strategies, authors, and writing, Keegan and Shrake were able to help children deal with issues of genre and general writing techniques.

Several other research studies have reported on the benefits of literature study groups. Templeton (1990) found that literature study groups exposed children to a variety of texts and involved them in responding to those texts through many types of activities including discussion and writing. Eeds and Wells (1989) studied the results of literature study groups in fifth and sixth grade classrooms. They found that talking and thinking about books in a cooperative learning situation encouraged children to read as a transaction in that they brought meaning to the text and took meaning from the text. Students, according to Eeds and Wells, constructed meaning, were personally involved in the reading, and engaged in inquiry and serious critique of the works they read.

Wells (1990) explored the use of literature study groups at the university level in a reading methods class. Students participated in literature study groups organized around poems, short stories and novels. Wells collected data through audiotapes and transcripts of the discussion groups, response journals and comments made in class. She concluded that the university students developed a "deeper understanding of what they do naturally as literature people" and "began to recognize the importance of a transactional view of teaching and learning" (p. 35).

Since I believe in the importance of literature study groups, I decided to incorporate them in my graduate reading courses. By modeling the use of literature study groups, I hoped students would become comfortable with them as a potential strategy for their own classrooms. Literature study groups would engage them in talking and thinking about literature and perhaps help them understand reading as a transaction as well as something about reader response theory.

In order to implement literature study groups, I had to make a number of decisions about organization, management, and materials. Since the graduate classes in which I wanted to use literature study groups meet one night each week for a semester, and the literature study group activity is only one of several teaching strategies I wanted to demonstrate or model, I had a limited amount of time to devote to the activity. I decided to use the study groups over a six week period in order to give the students a sense of the procedures they might follow if they implemented literature study groups in an elementary or secondary classroom. I devoted approximately one hour and a half of each class session during a part of the semester to hold in-class literature study groups as well as discussions about utilizing the strategy in the students' own classroom teaching.

Next I had to decide whether the entire class would read the same piece of literature or whether there would be some self-selection. Initially, I decided to incorporate both in the literature study groups. At the beginning of the semester, I surveyed the class to determine if students had read several chapter books I pre-selected. I found one book that no one had read: *Prairie Songs* (1987). I asked a local children's book store to have enough copies of it available so that students could purchase copies. In addition the store ordered several copies of some of the other titles which students had not read. Students had to self-select a second book from among a set of chapter books including *Good Night, Mr. Tom* (1982), *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* (1984), *The Island on Bird Street* (1984) and *The Night Journey* (1986).

In order to model the activity as closely as possible to the way I would anticipate it being used in an elementary or secondary classroom and to enable the group to share in some group decisions, I asked students to forego reading the books ahead of time. I wanted them to have the experience of predicting and raising authentic questions as they worked their way through the books.

I began the literature study group activity by carrying out several pre-reading activities with *Prairie Songs*. I used pre-reading question charts and had students make up sentences using key words from the book. Then I assigned approximately one-third of the chapter book for the next week's class. When the students returned the following week they randomly formed discussion groups which remained stable for the duration of the literature study group activity on *Prairie Songs*. The students participated in a free discussion of the book and also responded to some guided questions which I distributed to the groups. For example, I asked groups to discuss what they liked about the book, which characters they identified with, if any, and what important kinds of prior knowledge might be needed to enjoy or respond to the book. I also asked them to make some predictions about what might happen as the story developed. At the end of the session, each group of students decided how much they would read for the next week.

The same in-class procedure was followed for the second and third literature study group sessions. During the second and third sessions, however, I involved the students in several literature extension activities. For example, they did character study activities, webs, and story grammar charts (Macon, Bewell & Vogt, 1991). In addition, I asked each group to generate a list of other kinds of literature extension activities they might use with the book. Finally each group determined one activity and/or project they would complete to share with the rest of the class.

During the final session devoted to *Prairie Songs*, each group presented their activity or project related to the book and the entire class shared their reactions to the book and to the literature study group as an instructional strategy. The literature extension activities developed by each of the groups were quite creative, ranging from bulletin board displays to dramatic scenes with coordinated music.

In addition to the on-going discussion groups, I asked students to write entries in a journal or reading response log in order to have individual written responses to the book. Students frequently referred to ideas from their journals during the in-class small group discussions. I read and responded to the entries each week so that I could be aware of students' responses to the book and share in some of the on-going discussions.

After *Prairie Songs* was completed, students formed literature study groups based on their self-selected chapter book. Over a period of several weeks, each group read and discussed the books and decided, as a group, on one activity or project which they used to share their book with the rest of the class. Students identified and discussed similarities and differences among the books and made comparisons to *Prairie Songs*.

Students' reactions to the literature study groups have been generally enthusiastic. One student wrote in a journal "It was interesting to share my feelings with the others in my group. We had a lot of the same responses." Another said "This was fun for me." Finally a student who had connected a personal experience with something she had read in *The Night Journey* wrote "I cried today as I read Rache's account of Nana Shasie's death. I cried for Rache, and, quite frankly, I cried a little for Aunt Cath too."

In addition to these individual reactions, I found that the experience of reading and discussing a book such as *Prairie Songs* brought about a sense of community in the classroom. Many students seemed to feel quite comfortable sharing some very personal experiences that they were reminded of while reading Conrad's book. The shared reading and the group discussions, I believe, helped create a supportive and open environment for the students and resulted in an authentic experience.

I believe students experienced reading as transaction and gained some insights into the benefits of literature study groups for children. Based on class discussions and journal entries, I could tell that students found different meanings from the texts. These meanings varied with the individual backgrounds as well as the intellectual and emotional differences of the students. They each constructed their own meanings of the story and compared them to others. As they participated in the study groups, students thought critically about the meanings they were ascribing to the text, and they puzzled over ways they or their group could do something special to best illustrate what the book or books had meant to them.

I am continuing to use literature study groups in my graduate reading education classes. I believe this activity, which included engagement and demonstration as well as other components of the Cambourne model (1988), is well worth the time it takes. And it enables me to demonstrate the importance I hold for real books in the teaching of reading. In the semesters since my initial use of literature study groups in the graduate reading courses, I have used only one book for the entire class. It is difficult to fit in the two separate types of literature study groups because of the need to deal with other reading issues and classroom strategies. Even the more limited implementation of literature study, however, I feel is a valuable and authentic learning experience for the students and a challenging way to teach.

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Readin' Bout Huntin' an Fishin' in Appalachian Secondary Schools

Thomas Cloer, Jr., Amy D. McMahan

After 25 years of working in language arts/reading, attending an infinite number of meetings, conventions, and colloquia on reading, it seems odd that one never encountered even a reference to a session on secondary reading that contained content related to hunting and fishing. Yet, those of us from the southern mountains know that our rural secondary boys are certainly deeply involved with these outdoor pursuits. The theoretical perspective, therefore, of this paper is that attitudes and interests really matter, and in keeping with the theme of this conference, as we're putting the pieces together, affective concerns should not be shortchanged.

The major objective of this paper is to share results of a study on the desirability of a sample of rural secondary students in upstate South Carolina to read about hunting and fishing, and how much these students report reading about hunting and fishing in their secondary curriculum.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Smith (1988) has suggested that the emotional response to reading is the primary reason most people read for recreational purposes. Results published in the Reading Report Card from the National Center for Educational Statistics (1990a) indicated that until students are exposed through schools and home to more varied reading experiences, the reading proficiency of American students is unlikely to improve dramatically. These data showed that the secondary students who read most frequently were also the most proficient, and that those who never read for fun had the lowest proficiency.

Authors of Learning to Read in Our Nation's Schools (NCES, 1990b), concluded that at least half of the 8th and 12th graders reported some difficulty reading literature textbooks. This was true for students in vocational/technical programs, general programs, and academic programs. These findings suggest that diverse reading material is needed in secondary literature classes.

Ross and Fletcher (1989) studied attitudes toward reading of children in Tennessee; 189 were from rural areas, 109 from inner-city area, and 202 from a school near a university. The subjects were in grades three, four, and five. Ross and Fletcher found that the rural children's attitudes were the most negative. Even inner-city children had more positive attitudes about reading than rural Tennessee children. Researchers also found that girls had better attitudes than boys.

Cloer and Pearman (1993) found that subjects in middle grades had more negative attitudes than primary grade children. Cloer and Pearman (1992) also found that boys had more negative attitudes about academic and recreational reading than girls.

The most recent analyses of the data from the national Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 1991) reveal that females at ages 9, 13, and 17 outperformed their male counterparts in each of six reading assessments conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress from 1971 to 1990. The gap between males and females was approximately the same in 1990 as in 1971 and males still trailed females in all five levels of difficulty assessed by the tests.

Weintraub (1990) reviewed longitudinal research by Smith (1990) who examined attitude development from childhood to adulthood. Subjects' attitudes about reading were assessed in grades 1, 6, 9, 12, and 5 years after high school graduation. The adults in the study, ages 35 to 44, were given the Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (Wallbrown, Brown & Engin, 1977), plus several questionnaires about reading habits and perceptions. The aim of the research was to determine how well early attitude measurements predicted adult attitudes. Smith found that high school students' attitudes were important in predicting adult attitudes. Smith also found that females had significantly higher positive attitude scores than males.

Guzzetti (1990) found that linking students' hobbies and interests to elements in a novel as well as teacher modeling of a story retelling resulted in significantly improved attitudes in a general English class. Guzzetti assessed change in attitudes using The Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980).

Overall, results of the research reviewed suggest that adolescent boys from rural areas are at risk of developing negative attitudes about reading. If we are to put all the pieces together, we must not overlook ways to assist youngsters who make few connections to the secondary curriculum. As these data indicate, attitudes toward reading at the secondary level carry over into the adult years. Guzzetti's (1990) research makes us hopeful that we too might link students' hobbies and interests to a good book and cause students to read voraciously.

Method

The current study attempted to determine if there was a significant difference between what a sample of rural secondary students want to read and what they actually do read about hunting and fishing. The investigators also examined the difference in attitudes of rural secondary students toward hunting as opposed to fishing, as well as gender differences.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 545 secondary students in 32 English classes at a rural, secondary school in South Carolina. Seven different English teachers participated. There were 279 males and 266 females. Overall, students from 11 9th grade-classes, 10 10th grade-classes, 7 11th grade-classes, and 4 12th grade classes were involved in the study.

Procedure

The English teachers administered a short, 10 item attitude inventory related to students' desire to read about hunting and fishing and an inventory of time spent pursuing those interests (See Appendixes A and B).

The ten item attitude assessment included five items related to reading about fishing and five items related to reading about hunting. The corresponding assessment of reading frequency in relation to the topics also contained ten items. Teachers were given written directions as to administration of the inventories. They were told that the researchers were interested in finding ways to better motivate rural youth to read and would have specific recommendations for the teachers to consider. Students identified only their gender and grade when they completed the instruments.

Results

The interval-ratio scale used for assessing attitudes toward reading about fishing and hunting yielded mean scores of 5 to 25. The corresponding assessment of reading frequency in relation to fishing and hunting also yielded mean scores of 5 to 25. Each individual's assessment was tabulated and then collapsed into 32 class means for statistical analysis.

Table 1 gives t-test results for independent means. The desire to read about fishing ($t = 7.68$, $p.<.001$) and hunting ($t = 8.29$, $p<.001$) was significantly greater for males than females. While males reported reading about hunting ($t = 5.47$, $p.<.001$) and fishing ($t = 4.28$, $p<.001$) infrequently in school, they read significantly more about those topics than females.

Table 1

Mean Scores of Students' Attitudes Toward Reading About Hunting/Fishing and Frequency of Reading About Hunting/Fishing

Inventory	Fishing	Hunting
Attitudes		
Males		
M	15.93	17.02
SD	3.59	3.78
Females		
M	9.75	10.03
SD	2.79	2.83
Frequency		
Males		
M	8.53	9.10
SD	2.16	2.35
Females		
M	6.61	6.55
SD	1.28	1.12

Table 2 gives *t*-test results for correlated means of males. The desire to read or attitude about fishing and hunting was compared to frequency of in-school reading for males. Results indicated that males have a significantly greater desire to read more about the topics. It is also evident that they encounter such topics infrequently.

Table 2

Mean Differences in Males' Attitude Toward Reading About Hunting/Fishing and Frequency of Reading About Hunting/Fishing

Inventory	[a]Fishing	[b]Hunting
Attitude		
M	15.93	17.02
SD	3.54	3.78
Frequency		
M	8.53	9.10
SD	2.16	2.35

[a] $t = 14.12$ $p. < .001$
[b] $t = 14.13$ $p < .001$

Table 3 gives *t*-test results for correlated means of females. The desire to read or attitude about fishing and hunting were compared to in-school reading for females. While females reported less desire to read about hunting and fishing than males, their frequency of reading about the topics was significantly less than their desire to read.

Table 3

Mean Differences in Females' Attitudes Toward Reading About Hunting/Fishing and Frequency of Reading About Hunting/Fishing

Inventory	[a]Fishing	[b]Hunting
Attitude		
M	9.75	10.03
SD	2.79	2.83
Frequency		
M	6.61	6.55
SD	1.28	1.12

[a] $t = 9.40$, $p < .001$
[b] $t = 8.60$, $p < .001$

The analysis of means by grades using *t*-tests revealed no significant differences in attitudes or frequency at all grade levels examined for males and females.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm earlier findings of gender differences related to reading. The males in this rural Appalachian secondary school, while not euphoric about reading anything, were not negative toward content related to hunting and fishing. Females differed significantly from males in their attitudes toward the topics and their reading pursuits. It is important to note that the media specialist in this school works diligently to discover reading interests and attempts to meet individual interests. The media specialist was an important contributor to this study and asked that we assist her by suggesting reading materials related to these topics if we find that students are interested. Lists of materials about hunting/fishing that we identified for her are available to readers who request them.

It has been suggested that males in rural secondary schools have the most negative attitudes toward recreational reading. Remedial reading programs of the past have largely ignored the role of attitudes in the process of becoming literate. This study attempted to find a reason for some of this negativity and more importantly what might be done to ameliorate it. We have suspected since working as Appalachian volunteers in one-room schoolhouses during the 1960s that we might get further in language arts in a shorter amount of time by valuing, using, and making useful what these rural boys bring to the learning situation. As we rush to gain more insight into multi-cultural education, we should not neglect the rich Appalachian culture from which these secondary students emanate.

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Appendix A

Please put "M for male or "F" for female on this line. ______
Please put your grade (9, 10, 11, or 12) on this line. ______

This is an inventory to see if you are interested in reading about fishing and/or hunting and if you read about them in school. Please mark the answer that best fits your attitude.

1. I enjoy reading magazines about fishing.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

2. I enjoy reading books about fishing.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

3. I enjoy reading about different ways to improve my fishing skills.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

4. I enjoy reading about fishing experiences of different people.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

5. I enjoy reading about clothes, tackle, and equipment I could use while fishing.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

6. I enjoy reading magazines about hunting.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

7. I enjoy reading books about hunting.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

8. I enjoy reading about different ways to improve my hunting skills.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

9. I enjoy reading about hunting experiences of different people.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

10. I enjoy reading about equipment, clothes, and firearms that I could use while hunting.
( ) strongly agree ( ) agree ( ) undecided ( ) disagree ( ) strongly disagree

Appendix B

In responding to the inventory below, please mark the answer that best describes your situation.

1. We read magazines in school about fishing.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

2. We read books in school about fishing.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

3. We read in school about different ways to improve fishing skills.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

4. We read in school about fishing experiences of different people.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

5. We read in school about clothes, tackle, and equipment to use while fishing.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

6. We read magazines in school about hunting.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

7. We read books in school about hunting.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

8. We read in school about different ways to improve hunting skills.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

9. We read in school about hunting experiences of different people.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

10. We read in school about equipment, clothes, and firearms to use while hunting.
( ) always ( ) usually ( ) sometimes ( ) seldom ( ) never

Students' Perceptions of High School Stratification and Opportunities

Richard J. Telfer, Robert E. Jennings, Reed Mottley, George McNinch

Recently, efforts have been made across the country to respond to changing workplace literacy needs. These initiatives fall into three categories. First, a number of states and school districts have developed tech prep initiatives, where high school students are counseled into courses that will prepare them for and allow them to choose either academic or technical careers. Second, related initiatives have been developed to encourage all students to focus on education for employment. These efforts provide specific units, activities, or courses to help all students learn about and understand workplace literacy requirements. Third, other initiatives have stressed the behaviors required in modern workplaces, specifically focusing on the development of problem solving abilities and the ability to work cooperatively as a team with other individuals.

These initiatives all shift the focus of high school preparation. High schools have tended to have a strong academic focus, with a primary responsibility of preparing students for college. With the move to strengthen workplace literacy, high schools appear to be taking more responsibility for job preparation. This is likely to have two effects. First, the attempt to make technical preparation as rigorous and desirable as academic preparation is likely to attract to the technical areas many students who previously avoided those areas. Second, many students who in previous generations would not have finished high school or have gone on for further training will now be pursuing studies in technical areas. With this shift, a natural question is whether high schools are making fundamental changes in their approaches to education or simply making surface changes while preserving the fundamental nature of existing high schools.

This study looks at concerns that have been raised about structural barriers within schools that prevent restructuring or reform. Kenneth Gray (1993) suggests that high schools are structured to provide a type of eliteness that separates academically more successful students (the haves) from less successful students (the have nots), making it impossible to take advantage of the talents of all students.

Objectives

This study was designed to explore the following questions: (a) Does the high school educational program divide students into educational groups and thereby foster notions of elitism? and (b) What opportunities do high school students have to work cooperatively, learn problem solving skills, and participate in shared decision making. Specifically, the study has two major purposes: (a) to examine high school students' perceptions of the relationship between perceived intelligence-based group membership and available literacy opportunities, expectations, and requirements; and (b) to understand better the extent to which high school students presently are exposed to cooperative work, problem solving skills, and shared decision making.

Perspective or Theoretical Framework

Concerns have been raised about structural barriers that keep schools from making necessary changes. Kenneth Gray (1993) suggests that high schools push a type of eliteness that separates more successful students from less successful students. Gray refers to this situation as *Taylorism*, a type of social Darwinism that suggests that the fittest individuals in our society should do the thinking while the others should do the work. According to Gray, this division tends to prevent some high school students from being exposed to cooperative learning, effective problem solving, and shared decision making. For example, high school organizational patterns make difficult, if not impossible, the forming of cooperative, small-group teams inherent in the Total Quality Management model for business organization.

> As Gray states, If industrial concerns about the division between managers and workers and about the need to implement Total

> Quality Management are sincere, attention must be paid to institutions that teach the old ways. One such institution is the schools, particularly high schools. Widespread worker/manager collaboration and harmony will not develop unless high school educators begin to value and communicate mutual respect instead of elitism. (p. 373)

Gray's criticism is congruent with that of other educational critics and pundits who have assailed the U. S. educational system over the past several years with alarming statistics and predictions about the lack of preparation of American workers for the modern workplace.

Mikulecky (1982) and Rush, Moe and Storlie (1986) have pointed to the increasing complexity of the demands of the workplace, including but not restricted to literacy demands. With the moving of American plants to third world locations, where workers are available at less cost to the manufacturer (Moore, 1988; Morrow, 1992; Osling, 1991), the jobs that remain will require different kinds of skills of the workers (i.e., ability to work cooperatively and successfully in small group problem solving). Such cooperativeness is built upon mutual respect among workers.

If Gray is correct, continued preparation of just a few future managers and many lower level workers will not allow the United States to meet workplace requirements. The elitism promoted in high schools, he argues, establishes mind sets that are then carried into the workplace.

This study was designed to assess the current situation in high schools. Specifically, the study looked at whether elitism seems to exist in high schools and whether high schools are providing opportunities for students to engage in the kinds of activities that encourage working together effectively. Do the high schools teach the old ways as Gray suggests? Or are high schools providing opportunities for students to prepare for modern workplace requirements?

Methods

The subjects in this study were 198 high school students (approximately 50 from each of four states) in 4 small cities in Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, and Wisconsin. The students were high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

A 28-item questionnaire (See Appendix) was developed to measure (a) students' perceptions of formal and informal ability grouping in their schools and (b) the extent of students' experiences working cooperatively, solving problems, and sharing in decision making. Of the first 25 items 21 used a 5-point Likert scale and 4 required a yes-no choice and were designed to ascertain students' perceptions in 4 areas: (a) types of academic stratification or grouping found in high schools, (b) differential views of the different academic groups, (c) types of opportunities afforded to different groups, and (d) personal responses to the academic stratification. The final three items were open-ended questions addressing students' exposure to cooperative learning, problem solving, and shared decision making.

The questionnaires were administered by classroom teachers to students in required high school social studies or English classes. Students were given a brief explanation of the project, indicating that the study was intended to examine students' perceptions. Students were instructed to circle the responses that represented their opinions about each of the first 25 statements and write out their answers for the 3 open-ended questions. Students were instructed not to put their names on the papers.

Data Analysis and Results

The responses to the questionnaire were tabulated and summary statistics were computed for each of the items. For each of the 21 Likert scale items, a mean score was calculated. For the four yes-no items, the number of yes and no responses were counted. Since these 25 items were meant to address 4 areas of interest, the responses were examined within areas as well.

The responses to the three open-ended questions were read, grouped, and analyzed. For each of the three questions, two types of responses were identified: (a) the subject area, if any, that was mentioned, and (b) the description of the situation or activity. Each question is discussed individually, with the most common explanations for each of the questions identified.

Scores on Individual Items

The scores on 21 individual Likert-scale items ranged from 2.77, representing **sometimes** to **rarely** (At my school, students who are considered to be smart take vocational courses), to 4.17, signifying **usually** to **always** (Teachers expect more of some students than of others). The average score for these 21 items was 3.48, midway between **sometimes** and **usually** (See Table 1).

Table 1

Mean Scores on Survey of Student Perceptions

Item	Mean Score (1-5)	Question
1	3.38	At my high school, students are grouped in classes according to their abilities.
2	3.69	Classes at my school have a mixture of above average, average, and below average ability students.
3	3.10	Classes at my school are open to all students, regardless of ability.
4	3.26	At my school, students associate mostly with other students of the same academic ability.
5	3.94	At my school, students who are considered to be smart take college prep courses.
6	2.77	At my school, students who are considered to be smart take vocational courses.
7	3.32	At my school, students who are considered to be smart are chosen as student government leaders.
8	3.39	At my school, students who are considered to be smart are elected as class officers.
9	3.90	Students who are considered to be smart go to college.
10	2.92	Students who are considered to be smart go to technical school.
11	3.42	At my school, students are given privileges because of their abilities.

12	3.24	A student who is not in the "smart" group can join the group by doing well in classes.
13	3.67	When students who are considered to be smart ask questions, they know their questions will be answered.
14	3.37	When students of average or low ability ask questions, they know their questions will be answered.
15	3.78	Teachers are patient with high ability students.
16	3.32	Teachers are patient with low ability students.
17	4.17	Teachers expect more of some students than of others.
18	3.54	High ability students consider themselves to be better than others.
19	3.78	I enjoy working with students of varying abilities, high, middle, and low.
20	3.28	High ability students are popular.
21	3.94	Students who are more capable have more opportunities in school.

The highest scores were on items 5, 9, 17, and 21, with scores of approximately 4.00, roughly representing **usually**. These items address smart students taking college prep courses, smart students going to college, teachers expecting more of some students than of others, and more opportunities being available to some students.

The lowest scores were on items 3, 6, and 10, with scores of approximately 3.00, roughly representing **sometimes**. These items concern whether classes are open to students of all ability levels, whether smart students take vocational classes, and whether smart students go to technical school.

The responses to the four yes-no items ranged from 92% yes to 59% yes (See Table 2). The highest percentage of yes responses was to item 25, "At my school, there is a group of students who always get good grades." The lowest percentage of yes responses was to item 24, "At my school, some social studies classes are only for students who are considered smart," The average percentage of yes responses across the four items was 75%.

Table 2

Percentage of Yes Responses to Items 22-25

Item	Yes Responses %	Question
22	75	At my school, some English classes are only for students who are considered smart.
23	75	At my school, some math classes are only for students who are considered smart.
24	59	At my school, some social studies classes are only for students who are considered smart.
25	92	At my school, there is a group of students who always get good grades.

The first group of items (1-4, 22-25) addressed the types of academic stratification or grouping found in high schools. The responses to the first four items were in the moderate range, between **sometimes** and **usually**, but tending toward **sometimes**. Taken together these responses tend to suggest that students are **sometimes** grouped according to their abilities, with classes **usually** containing a mixture of abilities, with classes **sometimes** available to students regardless of ability, and with students **sometimes** associating with others of like ability.

Items 22-25 indicate that some English, math, and social studies classes are only for smart students, with a higher percentage of respondents viewing this as true for English and math classes. Items 22-25 also indicate that a group of students is perceived as always getting good grades.

The second group of items (5-10, 12) addressed whether different expectations exist for the different academic groups. The biggest differences concerned whether smart students would take college prep courses, take vocational courses, attend college, or attend technical school. Smart students are more likely to take college prep courses (3.94 **usually**) than vocational courses (2.77, **sometimes**). Smart students are more likely to go to college (3.90, **usually**) than go to technical school (2.92, **sometimes**).

A slight preference seems to exist in favor of selecting smart students as student government leaders or class officers, but the scores are in the **sometimes** range (3.32 to 3.39). Movement into the smart group seems possible, but not guaranteed (item 12, 3.24, **sometimes**).

The third group of items (11, 13-17) addressed the types of opportunities afforded to different groups of students. The highest score was seen on item 17, indicating that teachers have different expectations for some students (4.24, **usually**). More moderate scores were seen on the other items. Students are given privileges because of their abilities (3.42, **sometimes**). Differences in responses to low and high ability students in answering their questions and showing patience were slight. Smart students were seen as more likely to have their questions answered (3.67) than were students of average or low ability (3.37). Teachers were seen as more likely to be patient with high ability students (3.78) than with low ability students (3.32).

The fourth group of items related to more personal responses to possible academic stratification. Three of these items addressed students' perceptions of higher ability students. The scores ranged from 3.28 on item 20, indicating that high ability students are **sometimes** popular, to items 18 and 20, indicating that high ability students **usually** or **sometimes** consider themselves to be better than others and that more capable students **usually** have more opportunities in school. The other item in this section suggests that respondents **usually** enjoy working with students of varying abilities.

Responses to Open-Ended Questions

The responses to the open-ended questions were read and then categorized. For each question, two types of information were categorized: (a) the subject area, if any, that was mentioned and (b) the description that was provided. The responses to these open-ended questions were often brief, with many individuals simply mentioning a subject area or giving a very brief description.

The first question asked students to describe a situation where they have worked cooperatively with other students within the classroom. Of the 198 respondents, 112 identified one or more classes in which this occurred. The two classes mentioned most often were Science (16.2% of the respondents) and English (15.2%) of the respondents (See Table 3).

Table 3

Classes in Which Students Work Cooperatively

Subject	Number	Percentage
Science	32	16.2
English	30	15.2
Social Studies	17	8.6
Mathematics	12	6.1
Foreign Language	11	5.6
Other	15	7.6

The descriptions of the situations were brief. The most commonly noted descriptions referred to working cooperatively in group projects of some sort (21.2% of the respondents). The other commonly mentioned descriptions referred to labs (15.2%), specifically science labs (See Table 4).

Table 4

Situations in Which Students Work Cooperatively

Description	Number	Percentage
Completing Group Projects	53	26.8
Working on Labs	30	15.2
Completing Classwork/Assignments	18	9.1
Working Together/With Partners	17	8.6
Helping Others/Tutoring	8	4.0
Other (Miscellaneous & Negative)	29	14.6

The second question asked students to identify a class they've taken that emphasized problem solving and to explain what was done in the class to emphasize problem solving. Of the 198 respondents, 133 identified one or more classes in which problem solving was emphasized. The classes mentioned most often were Mathematics classes (41.9% of the respondents). No other classes were mentioned nearly as frequently (See Table 5).

Table 5

Classes Which Emphasize Problem Solving

Subject	Number	Percentage
Mathematics	82	41.9
Science	25	12.6
English	10	5.1

Social Studies	4	2.0
Other	18	9.1

The explanations of what was done to emphasize problem solving were generally brief. The most common explanations referred to simply working on solving problems (mentioned by 33.8% of respondents), typically referring to steps in problem solving. Most of the references to steps in solving problems were stated within the context of mathematics classes. The next most common response was a negative response (13.6%), indicating that nothing was done or no class emphasized problem solving. Other responses were widely varied (See Table 6).

Table 6

What Was Done to Emphasize Problem Solving

Description	Number	Percentage
Working Problems (Steps Involved)	67	33.8
Nothing	27	13.6
Practice	13	6.6
Lab Activities	7	3.5
Work With Hypothetical Situations	6	3.1
Addressing Personal Problems	4	2.0
Other	16	8.1

The third question asked students to give an example of a class where shared decision making was encouraged. Of the 198 respondents, 115 identified one or more classes in which this occurred. The class mentioned most often was English (25.3% of the respondents). Other classes were mentioned far less frequently (See Table 7).

Table 7

Classes in Which Shared Decision Making is Encouraged

Subject	Number	Percentage
English	50	25.3
Social Studies	15	7.6
Mathematics	14	7.1
Science	9	4.5
Business	4	2.0
Foreign Language	4	2.0
Other	20	10.1

The descriptions of the situations were brief. The most commonly noted descriptions referred to student choice in making decisions regarding classroom activities and grading systems (17.7& of respondents) and testing (10.1%). Again, a number of respondents (8.4%) indicated that nothing had been done to encourage shared decision making. Other responses were quite varied (See Table 8).

Table 8

Situations in Which Shared Decision Making Was Encouraged

Description	Number	Percentage
Determining Assignments and Grades	35	17.7
Making Decisions About Tests	20	10.1

Nothing	17	8.4
General Class Decision Making	11	5.6
Decisions About Extra-Curricular Activities	9	4.5
Current Events	8	4.0
Discussion	8	4.0
Other	29	14.6

Discussion

This study examined two related issues that may impact on attempts to respond to changing workplace literacy needs. First, this study looked at the perceptions of high school students about the relationship between perceived intelligence-based group membership and available literacy opportunities, expectations, and requirements. Second, the study also looked at the extent to which high school students presently are exposed to cooperative work, problem solving skills, and shared decision making. The students' responses to the survey instrument suggest several conclusions.

Closed-Ended Items

First, there seems to be a clear expectation that smart students will choose to attend college rather than technical school. While some will attend technical school, college remains the desirable alternative. This finding, though not surprising, suggests that non-college prep tracks are seen as inferior.

Second, the existence of academic stratification seems to be generally accepted. Although respondents indicated that the stratification was less than absolute, most found it to be present at least sometimes. The responses to the questions about English, math, and social studies classes suggest that the stratification is much more prevalent in English and math than in social studies, but the stratification is present in all three areas.

Third, the expectation seems to be that smart students will be selected to serve in student government. Although the scores are moderate, the expectation is clearly there that these students are more likely than others to be involved in this way.

Fourth, the students surveyed apparently believe that teachers treat more intelligent students differently from less intelligent students. The perception is that teachers are more patient with more intelligent students and more likely to respond to their questions. Whether this, indeed, is true, there is a perceived difference in how the groups of students are treated.

Fifth, in a generalized sense, more capable students seem to be perceived as slightly more popular, with relatively high opinions of themselves, and with more opportunities. This suggests the perception of at least a certain degree of eliteness.

Open-Ended Items

Student responses to the open-ended items suggests the following: First, a sizable number of students indicated that they were in at least one class that emphasized working cooperatively. The classes were distributed quite widely, with five subject areas mentioned at least ten times. Since the students were not required to list more than one subject area, these numbers may well be underestimates. The situations in which students worked cooperatively were not surprising. Most of those describing a situation either described a group project or a science lab.

Second, the situations in which problem solving was emphasized were clearly traditional, stressing mathematics heavily. Students appeared to be focusing their responses on the sorts of procedures that are used to solve mathematics problems, rather than on more generalizable kinds of problem solving. While the mathematics problem solving is important, the problem solving involved in job situations is likely to be quite different.

Third, the opportunities of students to participate in decision making were limited. Most of these involved somewhat limited decision making, focusing around assignments, grades, and tests. Students were given opportunities to choose from several assignments or to determine when a test should be administered.

Conclusions

The results of this study appear to support Gray's (1993) contention regarding stratification within our high schools. Students in different groups appear to be subject to different expectations and treatment. The results of the study also suggest that experience in small group, cooperative decision making and problem solving is not likely to be a significant part of students' high school experiences, especially when one considers problem solving outside the area of math.

If it is of value for the traditional leaders (those who take college prep courses and pursue college educations) and the traditional workers (those who opt for tech prep courses and non-college experiences) to tackle workplace problems and ventures effectively together, as Gray contents, efforts need to be made to break down the barriers between the groups of students. As part of educational reform and restructuring, our high school students need to begin to work cooperatively in decision making and problem solving. In this study, students indicated that they liked working with students with different abilities. By beginning to help these different students work together to cooperatively make decisions and solve problem, we can help better prepare them to enter the workplace.

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Appendix

Survey of Student Perceptions

Part A.

Directions: Respond to each of the items below by circling the number that best represents your opinion. Please use the following scale: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = usually, 5 = always.

	never always	
1.	**1 2 3 4 5**	At my high school, students are grouped in classes according to their abilities.
2.	**1 2 3 4 5**	Classes at my school have a mixture of above average, average, and below average ability students.
3.	**1 2 3 4 5**	Classes at my school are open to all students, regardless of ability.
4.	**1 2 3 4 5**	At my school, students associate mostly with other students of the same academic ability.
5.	**1 2 3 4 5**	At my school, students who are considered to be smart take college prep courses.
6.	**1 2 3 4 5**	At my school, students who are considered to be smart take vocational courses.
7.	**1 2 3 4 5**	At my school, students who are considered to be smart are chosen as student government leaders.
8.	**1 2 3 4 5**	At my school, students who are considered to be smart are elected as class officers.
9.	**1 2 3 4 5**	Students who are considered to be smart go to college.
10.	**1 2 3 4 5**	Students who are considered to be smart go to technical school.
11.	**1 2 3 4 5**	At my school, students are given privileges because of their abilities.

12. **1 2 3 4 5** A student who is not in the "smart" group can join the group by doing well in classes.

13. **1 2 3 4 5** When students who are considered to be smart ask questions, they know their questions will be answered.

14. **1 2 3 4 5** When students of average or low ability ask questions, they know their questions will be answered.

15. **1 2 3 4 5** Teachers are patient with high ability students.

16. **1 2 3 4 5** Teachers are patient with low ability students.

17. **1 2 3 4 5** Teachers expect more of some students than of others.

18. **1 2 3 4 5** High ability students consider themselves to be better than others.

19. **1 2 3 4 5** I enjoy working with students of varying abilities, high, middle, and low.

20. **1 2 3 4 5** High ability students are popular.

21. **1 2 3 4 5** Students who are more capable have more opportunities in school.

Part B.
Respond to the next four items by circling either Yes or No.

22. **Yes No** At my school, some English classes are only for students who are considered smart.

23. **Yes No** At my school, some math classes are only for students who are considered smart.

24. **Yes No** At my school, some social studies classes are only for students who are considered smart.

25. **Yes No** At my school, there is a group of students who always get good grades.

Part C.
Please briefly respond to the following three items.

1. Describe a situation where you have worked cooperatively with other students within the classroom.

2. Has any class you've taken emphasized problem solving? What course? What was done in that class to emphasize problem solving?

3. Give an example of a class where your teacher has encouraged the class to share in the decision making. What was the situation?

Assessing Basic Skills in Workplace Literacy Programs

Eunice N. Askov, Brett Bixler

With the release of the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993) much national attention is now focused on the need to upgrade literacy skills among adults as well as continue learning throughout life. Although the limitations of standardized, norm-referenced testing have been discussed and recognized in assessing literacy skills (Lazar & Bean, 1991; Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991), these tests continue to be widely used (Ehringhaus, 1991). Even in workplace/workforce literacy programs where they seem particularly inappropriate because they have not been developed for the functional context of the workplace, standardized achievement tests are being used to evaluate impact (Sticht, 1991).

Assessment in workplace literacy programs must meet the unique needs of every stakeholder—learners, unions, management, and literacy providers (Askov, 1993). While learners may find portfolio analysis (Tierney, et al., 1991), alternative assessments (Lytle & Wolfe, 1989), and participatory approaches (Jurmo, 1991) more meaningful, business/industry management may need hard data to demonstrate program impact and cost effectiveness. Furthermore, literacy providers often need standardized test results to report to the funding agents to show that learners are improving in basic skills. On the other hand, unions tend to be less interested in standardized test scores and more concerned about positive attitudes toward further education and empowerment (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990).

Criterion-referenced, as opposed to norm-referenced, assessments may satisfy the information needs of a majority of the stakeholders. If the assessments are standardized, having established validity and reliability, they may be more useful to management and literacy service providers. They may also be used to demonstrate mastery and learning to workplace literacy students and unions.

Criterion-referenced tests (Popham, 1978) also provide meaningful assessment information by indicating mastery or nonmastery of skills targeted for instruction. Criterion-referenced assessments should focus on the skills—both reading-to-do and reading-to-learn—that were identified as being essential in the literacy task analysis and, therefore, taught in the curriculum, such as job-related vocabulary. Criterion-referenced assessment, therefore, makes sense in providing not only diagnostic information about individuals but also data for program evaluation and accountability.

In addition, many adults training for entry-level jobs don't have realistic expectations of the basic skills required to perform required tasks or know whether their own basic skills are adequate for the jobs they want. By taking specially designed criterion-referenced tests that assess mastery of basic skills in the context of the workplace, students not only learn about their own mastery of essential basic skills but also about the specific literacy skills that are required for a job or job area.

For example, *Daybreak*, a computer-based, criterion-referenced assessment, helps adults obtain or progress in entry-level jobs by assessing related basic skills in a particular job area and diagnosing their strong and weak basic skills. This diagnosis enables the instructor to provide instruction in those weak areas. *Daybreak* can also be used in program evaluation as pre- and posttests and as an indicator of progress to be expected in its instructional counterpart *A Day in the Life....*

Daybreak is designed for adults reading at about 3rd- to 8th-grade levels. The software requires little computer sophistication. Adult learners can run through the program on their own after a few minutes of instruction on the use of the computer. The courseware is job-specific; it allows adults to assess their basic skills in the context of the job area they wish to enter. Because every job cannot be analyzed for the detailed basic skills required, the courseware addressed an array of job-related basic skills, targeted at under-prepared adults who have entry-level jobs or who aspire to entry-level jobs. The five occupational areas the courseware addresses are: food service, health care, maintenance, retail trade, and clerical support.

Through computerized examples of problems workers encounter on the job, learners can explore the job area they wish to enter as well as assess their basic skills in the context of that field. Explanations are given immediately for incorrect answers, providing opportunities for learning during the assessment. Graphics relevant to the current question are used.

Daybreak assesses the following basic skill areas:

- Reading

Daybreak assesses the learner's interpretation of forms, notes, and memos in the context of a job task. For example, a learner must read a memo and answer specific questions about it to complete a task.

- Writing

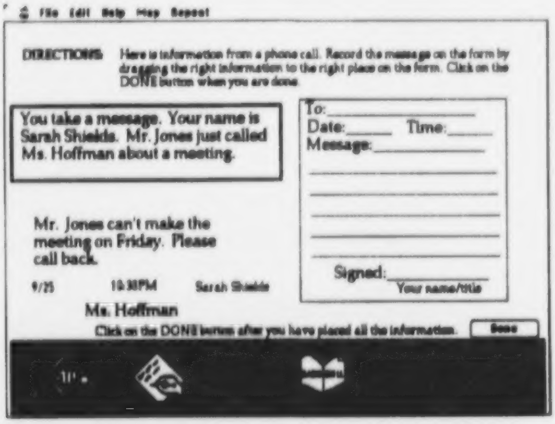
Writing is stressed through the completion of job forms, notes, and memos (see Figure 1). Free-response questions also give the learner an opportunity to write.

- Math

Daybreak gives learners math tasks that are common in the workplace. For example, the learner must calculate the change needed for a bill (see Figure 2).

- Problem Solving

The learner must apply problem-solving strategies to accomplish a task. In one task, for instance, the learner must read an inventory list and decide which items to order to restock a supply room.



DIRECTIONS: Here is information from a phone call. Record the message on the form by dragging the right information to the right place on the form. Click on the DONE button when you are done.

You take a message. Your name is Sarah Shields. Mr. Jones just called Ms. Hoffman about a meeting.

To: __________
Date: _____ Time: _____
Message: __________
Signed: __________
Your name/title

Mr. Jones can't make the meeting on Friday. Please call back.

9/25

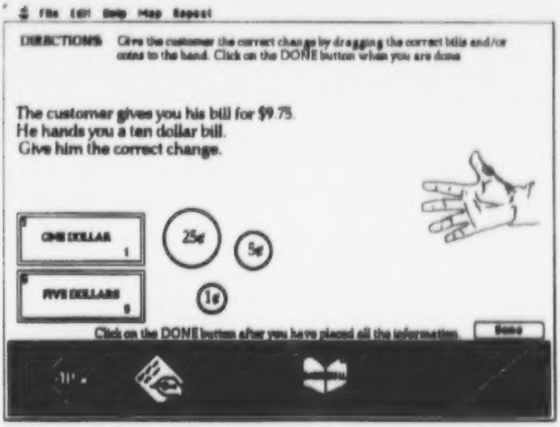
10:30PM

Sarah Shields

Ms. Hoffman

Click on the DONE button after you have placed all the information.

Figure 1. Completing a Telephone Message Form



DIRECTIONS Give the customer the correct change by dragging the correct bills and/or coins to the hand. Click on the DONE button when you are done.

The customer gives you his bill for $9.75.
He hands you a ten dollar bill.
Give him the correct change.

Click on the DONE button after you have placed all the information.

Figure 2. Making Change

Two modes of assessment are possible: *Learning* where the learner is dynamically allowed to change his/her answers based on learning during the assessment and *Test* where the assessment is used for program evaluation or measurement at one point in time. Used in *Learning* mode, where the student has the opportunity to change his/her answers based on learning from the items, assessments can also instruct learners.

Either mode—*Learning* or *Test*—can be selected by the instructor for individual adult students. The computer records students responses to criterion-referenced assessment items in easily accessible printed reports or on a screen display.

Daybreak also includes a word processor which the student can access at any time by a pull down menu button. The software also asks learners to write a sentence or two at the beginning of each unit to recall and use prior knowledge about the content. These learner-generated free responses can be printed or shown on a screen display for the instructor to analyze holistically.

Daybreak is being validated by correlation with the *Tests of Adult Basic Education* (TABE) during field testing primarily in Illinois and Pennsylvania. Reliability is being established through determining internal consistency. Results of the field testing will be reported at a later date. (*Daybreak* was developed and pilot tested by the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Penn State University. Currently, 14 field sites are using *Daybreak*. It will be distributed by Curriculum Associates, Inc.)

Since the instructor is able to elect in which mode the assessment will be used, it can be a powerful and flexible tool in adult and workplace-workforce literacy programs. It puts control of assessment in the hands of the teacher and learners. Learners, when asked how they like *Daybreak* as a test, usually respond that it is not a test. Because it will be standardized at the completion of field testing, it does provide a valid and reliable assessment device for student diagnosis and program evaluation in workplace/workforce literacy programs. It is a more realistic assessment of basic skills than norm-referenced tests because it encourages students to draw on their prior knowledge in answering questions rather than trying to create "culture free" tests which assume no background knowledge. A recent publication from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, states that assessment practice is moving toward creating "authentic assessments—appraisals that account for critical aspects of reading and that parallel everyday reading tasks" (Sweet, 1993, p. 12). *Daybreak* offers both standardization and authenticity as a new application of criterion-referenced assessment.

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Alternative Assessment: Use of Portfolio Assessment in a Workplace Literacy Program

Barbara H. Van Horn, Regina A. Guaraldi

Instructors in adult literacy programs often *observe* improvements in learners' basic skills; sometimes the learners also *feel* that they have made progress (Auerbach, 1992; Fingeret, 1993; Lytle, Marmor, & Penner, 1986). Unfortunately, neither instructors' observations nor learners' feelings are integral to scores on standardized, norm-referenced assessments--nor should they be. When learner progress is measured solely by traditional assessments, however, both instructors and learners are frustrated: Their observations and perceptions of progress and improvement are not documented and may be dismissed as irrelevant and unimportant.

How can instructors and learners document and validate these changes and improvements? What assessment instruments might better inform instruction, improving both teaching and learning? Ehringhaus (1991) and Lytle (1988) both report that adult educators are generally dissatisfied with the quality of information derived from standardized, norm-referenced tests and with the effects of these tests on both teaching and learning. Other critics of the use of standardized testing cite the tests' lack of relevance to adult tasks (Auerbach, 1992; Herman, Aschbacher & Winters, 1992; Metz, 1990). These same concerns and questions were expressed by Project STEP (Skills and Training for Employee Progress) instructors when informed that a significant number of learners had made little if any improvements on the standardized assessment instrument used for pre- and posttesting participants.

Description of the Workplace Literacy Program

Project STEP is a workplace literacy program funded by the U. S. Department of Education National Workplace Literacy Program. The project, located in Dade County, Florida, represents a partnership between the Miami-Dade Community College, Kendall Campus and Sunrise Community, a private, non-profit organization which provides long term, residential health care and training to individuals with severe to profound developmental disabilities. This project grew from Sunrise's recognition that many of their employees--most of whom are direct care workers--lack the literacy skills needed to complete their jobs or to benefit fully from existing in-house training.

Direct care workers' jobs are demanding and complex, requiring advanced communication skills. These workers are responsible for the daily care of individuals with profound disabilities. They must observe behaviors carefully and record their observations via written reports and oral communications. In addition, they must follow detailed procedures and make decisions regarding their charges' needs. Difficulty in completing these tasks has a serious impact on Sunrise's professional staff's ability to track changes in client's behaviors or to plan appropriate recommendations for treatment.

Adult educators at Miami-Dade worked with Sunrise staff to design and implement Project STEP. The program provides work-based literacy instruction to the direct care workers at Sunrise, improving literacy skills necessary in performing their current jobs and preparing them for a changing workplace. The Project STEP curriculum, providing up to 160 hours of instruction on-site, stresses the improvement of work-related oral and written communication skills as well as development of higher order (e.g., problem-solving, critical thinking) and metacognitive skills. The curriculum addresses the workplace literacy requirements of the job. At the same time, however, it focuses on the needs of the learners by incorporating instructional techniques that address a variety of learning styles, fostering a trusting student-teacher relationship, promoting successful learning experiences, and allowing for interactive, participative classrooms.

Specifically, the curriculum consists of five modules comprised of instructional units and curriculum-based tests. Units within each module are based on the results of a literacy task analysis conducted at the beginning of the project. This analysis identified essential job tasks and the underlying literacy skills needed to complete each task successfully. Each module uses these work-related tasks as the context through which related literacy skills are taught. For example, Module A includes documenting information in the log, filling out a seizure form, completing an unusual incident report, and completing a maladaptive behavior checklist. Literacy skills taught throughout this module include observing and recording details in a logical order, and building work-related vocabulary. This functional context approach (Sticht, 1987) facilitates learning by integrating literacy skills instruction with content (work-related tasks) familiar to the learners.

Description of STEP Participants

As of December, 1993, 250 direct care workers had participated in Project STEP. Almost half (49.2%) of the participants lacked high school diplomas. Based on the quality and quantity of information contained in written reports and forms however, administrators at Sunrise estimated that approximately 90% of these workers lacked the literacy skills needed to successfully complete their assigned tasks. Of the participants, the majority were African American women (93.9%) who had spent an average of five years on the job (range was three months to 21 years). The average age was 37 years old, ranging from 19 to 68 years old. Virtually all reported English as their native language (96.9%).

Description of Problem

The project director had been tracking changes in learners' literacy skills via a standardized reading test, as required by the federal government. The project used the ETS Tests of Applied Literacy Skills (TALS) (1992). The TALS incorporates the use of open-ended tasks that simulate the use of literacy skills in reading document and prose information and in solving quantitative problems. TALS requires students to write their responses; all tests must be hand scored.

In scoring the posttests, the director noticed that a significant number of learners whose pretest scores had been in the lowest level had made little or no improvement. By analyzing pre- and posttest questions, the director discovered, in fact, that learners were improving. Many responses, while not incorrect, were incomplete and, therefore, could not be recorded as correct. For example, one learner answered a pretest question incorrectly; her response indicated that she had not read the accompanying text. Her posttest response to a similar task, still incorrect, indicated that she had interacted with the text, locating part of the correct answer (she had underlined one of the three correct answers). In other words, learners were still getting zeros, but they were higher quality zeros. In addition, the director and instructors had known these individuals for 18 months and observed improvements in their literacy skills. The inability to document these changes via standardized, norm-referenced tests encouraged Project STEP staff to explore the use of alternative assessments.

Development of the Portfolio Assessment

Alternative assessments are seen by many adult educators as a possible solution to their concerns about using standardized tests. Philippi (1992), for example, suggests collecting representative samples of participants' work to demonstrate progress toward instructional goals, and using curriculum-based tests to determine the progress toward mastery of the instructional content. Alternative assessments focus on the ability of "students to actively accomplish complex and significant tasks, while bringing to bear prior knowledge, recent learning, and relevant skills to solve realistic or authentic problems" (Herman, Aschbacher, & Winters, 1993, p. 2). Auerbach (1992) describes alternative assessments as qualitative, process rather than product oriented, and context-specific, depending on the needs of the participants and the program.

Portfolio assessment is a type of alternative assessment that has not been used until very recently with adult learners. Portfolios provide a system for evaluating the results of various alternative assessments to make instructional decisions and to track progress toward both individual and programmatic goals. Meyer, Schuman, and Angello (1990) define portfolios as a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress or achievement in selected areas. Portfolios should include, at a minimum: (a) student participation in selection of portfolio content; (b) the criteria for selection; (c) the criteria for judging merit; and (d) evidence of student self-reflection.

With these concepts in mind, Project STEP staff met in a series of staff development and brainstorming sessions to formulate plans for using portfolios to track changes in their learners' literacy skills. Staff development focused on the purpose, types, and evaluation of portfolios. Brainstorming concentrated on the types of work to keep in the portfolios and methods of evaluating the materials. The decision was made to incorporate existing student work folders which included unit tests from the curriculum, writing exercises completed on work-related topics and tasks, and the learners' personal journals. Further, since much of the STEP curriculum stresses writing, instructors decided to focus on writing skills and developed a writing skills checklist to document their evaluations of student writing. Instructors also realized that many learners had shown a marked improvement in behaviors and attitudes that had an impact on their actions in class and on the job. As a result, the instructors also developed an Affective Domain Checklist to document their observations (See Appendix A and B).

Implementation of the Portfolio Assessment

Once the decisions had been made concerning the contents of the portfolio and procedures for documenting instructor observations and evaluations, instructors introduced the concept to the students. Project STEP instructors had collected student works, as described above, since the beginning of the instructional cycle. These work folders formed the basis for a process portfolio. Rather than illustrating each learner's best writings which is common in a best work portfolio, the process portfolio showed changes in work-related writing over time. Instructors and learners did not identify criteria for selecting works for the portfolios since all writing exercises were included. Although they were not involved in selecting materials, some learners became very involved with the concept, bringing writings they had completed at home to add to their portfolios.

Several activities enhanced the assessment process: personal journals, conferences with individual learners, and documentation of instructor observations. Instructors had encouraged learners to write about themselves, Project STEP, and their work in personal journals. Entries illustrated reflections about the learning process and how it changed over the course of instruction. In addition, instructors conferenced with learners to discuss their portfolio contents and their progress: however, this was not done at regular intervals due to scheduling problems.

Documenting instructor observations through the checklists was, perhaps, the biggest change in implementing a portfolio assessment for this project. Learners had completed writing samples and instructors had evaluated them throughout the instructional cycle. Instructors were looking for changes in the learners' writing skills; however, they had not formally documented them over time. The Writing Skills Checklist for each learner was completed reflectively since the checklist was developed late in the instructional cycle.

The Affective Domain Checklist provided a framework for instructors to document changes in behaviors and attitudes influencing learning that had not previously been recorded. Instructors' evaluations on the Affective Domain Checklist were also completed reflectively.

Results

Even though the procedures recommended in the literature for developing and implementing a portfolio assessment--as previously described--were not rigorously followed, the resulting assessments did have positive results.

Most importantly, the portfolio process allowed instructors to document changes in learners' literacy skills and in attitudes and behaviors affecting the learning process. By initiating the Writing Skills Checklist, instructors were able to focus on specific writing skills and how each learner had improved over the course of instruction. Instructor observations, as recorded on the Affective Domain Checklist, also documented individual learner's developing self-esteem and other attributes that affect learning and performing job tasks. Since traditional assessment instruments do not measure these aspects of student behavior and perception, these changes would otherwise have been lost.

In addition, the process of using portfolio assessment energized the instructors as well as the instruction and enhanced their relationships with the learners. Initially, the instructors were concerned that evaluating the portfolios, completing the checklists, and conferencing with students would detract from limited preparation and instructional time. At first, the process did take extra time; however, with practice, the instructors found that the benefits of using the checklists and conferencing outweighed the time commitment. Instructors realized that the checklists and conferencing allowed them to focus more effectively on the strengths and instructional needs of each student. Previously, the instructors believed they were doing this; however, the portfolio process encouraged a more organized and objective approach to evaluating student performance.

Finally, the portfolio process encouraged learners to become more aware of and actively involved in their own learning. As a result of using the process portfolio, for example, learners were able to see changes in their work-related writing over time. This allowed learners, through conferences with instructors, to focus on areas needing improvement, set realistic educational goals, and monitor their progress in achieving those goals. Many Project STEP students became actively involved with their portfolios, taking pride in the contents and adding work they had completed on their own time.

Conclusions

Portfolio assessment was effective in achieving the initial objectives of Project STEP staff; it allowed them to capture changes in basic skills that were not reflected in standardized test scores and to document observed changes in students' attitudes toward learning. On the basis of this alone, portfolio assessment appears to be a valuable tool in the workplace literacy setting.

In addition, however, the Project STEP experience suggests that using portfolio assessment with low-level adult learners may have an unanticipated benefit of potentially equal importance: enhancement of learners' affective development. Traditional assessment techniques focus on what students have not learned. In doing so, they frequently serve to remind low-level learners of previous academic failures and to reinforce already low self-esteem. Portfolio assessment, on the other hand, focuses on student progress and the positive aspects of the learning process. Project STEP staff report that the portfolio, while being used for assessment, is not viewed as either threatening or judgmental. The portfolio assessment process encourages students to become involved in their own learning and allows them to experience academic success. By doing so, the assessment process enhances the very attitudes it attempts toward learning, and allows them to see themselves as effective learners.

Recommendations

Van Horn and Brown (1993) emphasize that "adult educators must carefully document the current uses of portfolio assessment in adult literacy programs; this information will assist other programs interested in designing and implementing alternative assessments to determine learner gains (p. 65)." This paper documents the development and implementation of a portfolio assessment in a workplace literacy setting. The results are not conclusive; however, instructors in other workplace literacy programs may benefit from Project STEP's experiences. To this end, the authors offer the following recommendations:

1. Incorporate portfolios at the beginning of the instructional process. This will facilitate the integration of assessment with instruction, and ensure early learner involvement.

2. Involve students in the selection and evaluation of portfolio contents rather than relying solely on instructor observations.

3. Identify one or two key elements as the focus for alternative assessment. It takes time for instructors to get used to the idea and logistics of using this assessment technique; including too many elements will overwhelm them. Target those elements which are not likely to be captured by traditional assessment instruments.

4. Tailor existing assessment tools to meet programmatic and learner needs. The Project STEP checklists included in this text are only two of many alternative assessment instruments that exist (McGrail & Schwartz, 1993; McGrail & Purdom, 1992). These can provide a starting point for developing assessment tools to meet the diverse needs of workplace literacy programs.

5. Establish a benchmark measure of observed learner behaviors and attitudes within the first month of instruction. This gives instructors time to get to know the learners and to record their observations over time, rather than depending on reflective responses.

Project STEP's experience in using portfolio assessment suggests that it can provide a meaningful approach to assessing changes in work-related literacy skills and may be instrumental in enhancing the development of affective factors. However, additional research is recommended to validate these results. Such research will clarify the benefits of using alternative assessment tools in a workplace literacy setting and provide additional insight into their effective use.

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Appendix A

Student Name: ________________ Assessment Period: __________ to __________

Writing Portfolio Checklist

MECHANICS/USAGE

1. Minimal or incorrect punctuation											Appropriate/ correct punctuation
2. Incorrect use of nouns, pronouns, verbs, descriptors											Correct use of nouns, pronouns, verbs, descriptors
3. Illegible handwriting											Legible handwriting

WORD SELECTION/STRUCTURE

4. Minimal/inappropriate use of descriptive words (adjectives/adverbs)											Adequate/ appropriate use of descriptive words
5. Frequent use of sentence fragments (clauses and phrases)											Use of complete sentences
6. Frequent use of run-on sentences											Uses properly punctuated & varied sentences
7. Uses pictures and few words											Writes complete paragraphs w/ topic & relevant detail
8. Demonstrates no knowledge of on-the-job (O.J.T.) vocabulary											Demonstrates thorough working knowledge of O.J.T. vocabulary
9. Demonstrates limited general vocabulary											Demonstrates extensive general vocabulary

IDEAS/ORGANIZATION

10. Underdeveloped, vague, incomplete ideas											Relevant, clearly presented, fully developed ideas
11. Unclear, illogical organization of paragraphs											Logical, coherent organization of paragraphs
12. Revisions show no improvement											Revisions show marked improvement

---

"O" - Marks beginning measure
"X" - Marks ending measurement

Continue on next page ...

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Writing Portfolio Checklist
Page 2

Student Name: ______________________________

OTHER

13. Critical thought not evident in written work											Critical thought evident in written work
14. Journal entries short (less than 10 words)											Journal entries long (more than 100 words)
15. Journal entries infrequent (one a month)											Journal entries frequent (one a day)
16. Unable to orally describe thought processes (metacognition)											Able to orally describe thought processes (metacognition)
17. Critical thought not evident in oral dialogue											Critical thought evident in oral dialogue
18. Shows no interest in portfolio											Shows enthusiasm for portfolio
19. Includes minimal work in portfolio											Volunteers unassigned original work for inclusion in portfolio (poetry, letters, songs, essays, etc.)

Comments:

Instructor's Signature: ______________________________

"O" - Marks beginning measure
"X" - Marks ending measurement

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Appendix B

Student Name: ____________________ Assessment Period: ____________ to ____________

Affective Domain Checklist

		No Progress	A Little Progress	Quite a Bit of Progress	A Lot of Progress	Dramatic Progress
READING						
1.	Uses reference material (consults dictionary/index)	____	____	____	____	____
2.	Carries and/or reads books and newspapers	____	____	____	____	____
3.	Solicits reading material	____	____	____	____	____
LEARNING TO LEARN/METACOGNITION						
4.	Recognizes when help is needed	____	____	____	____	____
5.	Aware of thought processes used in completing tasks	____	____	____	____	____
6.	Able to explain/repeat steps sequentially	____	____	____	____	____
SPEAKING/LISTENING						
7.	Asks questions when needed	____	____	____	____	____
8.	Initiates conversation about work-related tasks	____	____	____	____	____
9.	Participates in class	____	____	____	____	____
SELF-ESTEEM						
10.	Demonstrates belief in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self	____	____	____	____	____
11.	Acknowledges errors without defensiveness	____	____	____	____	____
12.	Takes greater care in physical appearance	____	____	____	____	____
MOTIVATION AND GOAL-SETTING						
13.	Comes to class	____	____	____	____	____
14.	Willing to ask for help/further explanation	____	____	____	____	____
15.	Demonstrates willingness to learn	____	____	____	____	____
16.	Actively participating in other educational activities	____	____	____	____	____
17.	Identifying immediate, interim, and long-term work goals	____	____	____	____	____
18.	Investigating educational and occupational opportunities	____	____	____	____	____

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Affective Domain Checklist
Page 2

Student Name: ____________________

		No Progress	A Little Progress	Quite a Bit of Progress	A Lot of Progress	Dramatic Progress
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS						
19.	Saves and files handouts (organizational skill)	___	___	___	___	___
20.	Brings supplies to class (notebook, dictionary, pen/pencil, paper)	___	___	___	___	___
21.	Completes required work	___	___	___	___	___
22.	Arrives on time for class	___	___	___	___	___
23.	Exhibits pride in work	___	___	___	___	___
24.	Follows class rules and regulations	___	___	___	___	___
25.	Does not forget glasses or complain about eyesight to avoid frustrating tasks	___	___	___	___	___
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS/TEAMWORK/LEADERSHIP						
26.	Communicates with instructor	___	___	___	___	___
27.	Communicates with fellow classmates	___	___	___	___	___
28.	Shares personal life with class/instructor	___	___	___	___	___
29.	Works productively with others	___	___	___	___	___
30.	Volunteers to be spokesperson for group	___	___	___	___	___
31.	Fosters team spirit	___	___	___	___	___
32.	Shows empathy, respect, and support for others	___	___	___	___	___
33.	Demonstrates procedures and assists others when necessary	___	___	___	___	___
34.	Sticks to a schedule and group decisions	___	___	___	___	___
35.	Gives directions and feedback	___	___	___	___	___
36.	Exhibits positive behavior	___	___	___	___	___

Instructor's Signature: ____________________

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Readability and the Newbery Award Winners: How Do They Compare?

Nancy Clements, Cindy Gillespie, Rebecca Swearingen

Children learn to read by reading. Children will read when reading is made functional and interesting. The role of the teacher is to create the conditions under which reading is made functional and interesting. These three statements summarize the philosophy undergirding the whole language approach to literacy education (Rasinski & Gillespie, 1992). With the current emphasis on providing reading instruction that is literature-based or whole language based, the classroom teacher's role becomes one of decision maker. The teacher must choose books, activities, and instructional strategies that will meet the needs and interests of the children in the classroom.

Because the use of trade books is an integral part of a successful whole language program, classroom teachers must work cooperatively with school librarians to ensure they are sharing the best literature available with students. One common collection of books, considered to be some of the best literature for children, is the Newbery Award Winner collection.

To ensure that children have successful experiences with Newbery award winning books, the books must be at a comfortable reading level for the students and must be of interest to the students. One common way to determine whether books are at a comfortable reading level for students is to use readability formulae. Although many may argue that the use of readability formulae is outdated, Klare (1989) suggests that readability measures can be useful. He suggests that all readability formulae should be selected and applied with care. Klare (1989) also states that formulae do not predict perfectly how comprehensible a reader might find a piece of writing, but they are reasonably good compared to other kinds of psycho-educational predictors.

Even though the Newbery Award books have been honored since 1922, few studies have addressed the readability of these award-winning books, and no studies have compiled the readability of Newbery Award Winners over the past 72 years. Chatham (1980) researched the winners from 1945-1965, Moe and Arnold (1975) from 1948-1972, and Shafer's research (1976, 1986) spanned 1940-1986. The purpose of this investigation was to determine the readability levels of the Newbery Award books from 1922 to the present, to determine the interest level of the Newbery Award books.

Method

Three 100-word passages were randomly selected from the beginning, middle and end of each of 72 Newbery Award books for analysis using the computer program *Correct Grammar* (Reich & Wilson, 1991) which employs the Fry Readability Formula (Fry, 1977), the Flesch Reading Ease Score (Flesch, 1949), the Flesch-Kincaid Formula (Department of Defense, 1983), and the Gunning Fog Index (Gunning, 1952).

The Fry Readability formula is based on syllable count and the number of sentences. The Flesch Reading Ease (RE) Score is determined by the number of words per sentence (wl), the number of syllables per word (sl), and the application of the formula (RE = 206.835 - .846 wl - 1.01 sl). The Flesch-Kincaid System is based on a reading grade level (RGL) determined by multiplying the average sentence length by .4 (a), and the average word length by 12 (b) (RGL = a + b - 16.00). The Gunning Fog Index considers sentence length (sl), but emphasizes polysyllabic words (ps) to determine the school grade level (Fog = sl + ps x .04).

Readability formulae primarily incorporate two factors: word difficulty and sentence length. However, these two factors are not the only issues to consider when determining the reading level of text. An additional consideration is reader interest in a book (Anderson, Mason, & Shirley, 1984; Sadoski, Goetz, & Fritz, 1993). Data were also analyzed to determine text interest using *Sensible Grammar* (Long, 1991). Human interest (HI) scores range from dull to dramatic based on the percentage of personal words (pw) and personal sentences (ps) in the text (HI = .63 pw + .31 ps). (see Appendix A for Human Interest Words)

Results and Discussion

The readability of the Newbery Award books ranged from 0.4 - 12.1 using the aforementioned formulae (see Table 1). For a more detailed list of the results, see Appendix B.

Table 1

Summary of Readabilities of Newbery Award Winning Books

*Date	Title, Author, Publisher	Range of Readability
1922	*The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik Willem van Loon, Liveright.	10.0-12.1
1923	*The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle* by Hugh Lofting, Lippincott	6.0-9.5
1924	*The Dark Frigate* by Charles Hawes, Atlantic/Little	6.0-9.6
1925	*Tales from Silver Lands* by Charles Finger, Doubleday	6.0-10.6
1926	*Shen of the Sea* by Arthur Bowie Chrisman, Dutton.	3.3-5.0
1927	*Smoky, The Cowhorse* by Will James, Scribner's	6.0-10.0
1928	*Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji, Dutton	7.0-9.5
1929	*The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly, Macmillan	9.0-11.9
1930	*Hitty: Her First Hundred Years* by Rachael Field, Macmillan	6.0-8.0
1931	*The Cat Who Went to Heaven* by Elizabeth Coatsworth, Macmillan	6.0-6.6
1932	*Waterless Mountain* by Laura Adams Armer, Longmans	5.0-6.5
1933	*Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze* by Elizabeth Foreman Lewis, Winston	5.9-7.0
1934	*Invincible Louisa* by Cornelia Meigs, Little	8.0-10.9
1935	*Dobry* by Monica Shannon, Viking	8.0-9.1
1936	*Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol Ryrie Brink, Macmillan	5.5-7.0
1937	*Roller Skates* by Ruth Sawyer, Viking	6.2-9.0
1938	*The White Stag* by Kate Seredy, Viking	6.0-8.8
1939	*Thimble Summer* by Elizabeth Enright, Rinehart	4.4-5.0
1940	*Daniel Boone* by Janes Daugherty, Viking	8.0-9.0
1941	*Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry, Macmillan	6.0-7.0
1942	*The Matchlock Gun* by Walter D. Edmonds, Dodd	3.0-5.0
1943	*Adam of the Road* by Elizabeth Janet Gray, Viking	6.0-7.0
1944	*Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes, Houghton	4.2-5.0
1945	*Rabbit Hill* by Robert Lawson, Viking	6.8-8.0
1946	*Strawberry Girl* by Lois Lenski, Lippincott	4.0-6.0
1947	*Miss Hickory* by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, Viking	6.0-7.1
1948	*The Twenty-One Balloons* by William Pene Du Bois, Viking	7.0-7.8
1949	*King of the Wind: The Story of the Godolphin Arabian* by Marguerite Henry, Rand	5.0-5.1
1950	*The Door in the Wall* by Marguerite de Angeli, Doubleday	5.0-6.7

1951	*Amos Fortune: Free Man* by Elizabeth Yates, Aladdin	7.0-9.0
1952	*Ginger Pye* by Eleanor Estes, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich	6.0-8.5
1953	*Secret of the Andes* by Ann Nolan Clark, Viking	4.9-6.0
1954	*...And Now Miguel* by Joseph Krumgold, Crowell	5.0-6.6
1955	*The Wheel on the School* by Meindert DeJong, Harper	3.8-5.0
1956	*Carry on, Mr. Bowditch* by Jean Lee Latham, Houghton	3.8-5.0
1957	*Miracles on Maple Hill* by Virginia Sorenson, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich	5.0-6.8
1958	*Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith, Crowell	7.0-8.0
1959	*The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare, Houghton	6.0-7.4
1960	*Onion John* by Joseph Krumgold, Crowell	4.5-5.4
1961	*Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell, Houghton	5.0-7.4
1962	*The Bronze Bow* by Elizabeth George Speare, Houghton	4.0-5.0
1963	*A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle, Farrar	6.0-6.8
1964	*It's Like This, Cat* by Emily Cheney Neville, Harper	4.5-6.2
1965	*Shadow of a Bull* by Maia Wojciechowska, Atheneum	3.4-5.0
1966	*I, Juan de Pareja* by Borten deTrevino, Farrar	6.0-8.3
1967	*Up a Road Slowly* by Irene Hunt, Follet	8.0-9.0
1968	*From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E. L. Konigsburg, Atheneum	5.7-7.0
1969	*The High King* by Lloyd Alexander, Holt	6.0-6.6
1970	*Sounder* by William H. Armstrong, Harper	6.0-7.9
1971	*Summer of the Swans* by Betsy Byars, Viking	5.0-6.0
1972	*Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* by Robert C. O'Brien, Atheneum	6.0-7.1
1973	*Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George, Harper	5.6-6.0
1974	*The Slave Dancer* by Paula Fox, Bradbury	6.0-6.3
1975	*M. C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton, Macmillan	3.9-5.2
1976	*The Grey King* by Susan Cooper, Atheneum	6.0-8.0
1977	*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor, Dial	7.0-9.0
1978	*Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, Crowell	5.0-6.2
1979	*The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin, Dutton	8.1-10.0
1980	*A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal 1830-32* by Joan Blos, Scribners	5.0-7.0
1981	*Jacob Have I Loved* by Katherine Paterson, Crowell	6.0-7.8
1982	*A Visit to William Blanke's Inn: Poems for Innocent and Experienced Travelers* by Nancy Willard, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich	1.9-5.0
1983	*Dicey's Song* by Cynthia Voigt, Atheneum	5.3-6.0
1984	*Dear Mr. Henshaw* by Beverly Clearly, Morrow	4.3-5.8
1985	*The Hero and the Crown* by Robin NcKinley, Greenwillow	6.0-8.8
1986	*Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan, Harper	5.9-6.5
1987	*The Whipping Boy* by Sid Fleischman, Greenwillow	4.3-5.0
1988	*Lincoln: A Photobiography* by Russell Freedman, Clarion	8.0-9.0
1989	*Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* by Paul Fleischman, Harper	0.4-4.0
1990	*Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry, Houghton Mifflin	6.0-7.0
1991	*Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli, Little-Brown	6.0-7.0

1992	*Shiloh* by Phillis Reynolds Naylor, Athenum	3.4-4.7
1993	*Missing May* by Cynthia Ryland, Orchard	5.0-6.7

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*The date listed is the year the book won the award. The actual publication date is one year earlier than the date given for each winner.

Overall, the majority of Newbery winners fell into the fifth and sixth grade levels (see Table 2).

Table 2

A Summary of the Readability Analysis of the Newbery Award Books

Reading grade	Flesch grade required	Flesch/Kincaid grade	Gunning Fog	Fry
0.00-0.90	0	1	0	0
1.0-1.9	0	1	1	1
2.0-2.9	0	0	1	1
3.0-3.9	0	7	2	1
4.0-4.9	2	7	9	8
5.0-5.9	23	17	9	9
6.0-6.9	32	13	21	17
7.0-7.9	5	10	9	16
8.0-8.9	7	8	11	9
9.0-9.9	2	5	4	7
10.0-10.9	1	1	3	3
11.0-11.9	0	1	2	0
12.0-12.9	0	1	0	0

According to the formulae, the most readable were poetry books. Although the Fog Index indicated the book, *A Visit to William Blakes Inn* (1982) was the easiest, the 1989 winner, *A Joyful Noise* (0.4 - 4.0) was identified as the easiest book according to three of the other readability formulae. The most difficult book was the 1922 winner, *The Story of Mankind* (10 - 12.1). Other difficult books were *The Trumpeter of Krakow* (1929) and *The Westing Game* (1979).

Not surprisingly, the majority of Newbery winners were ranked Highly Interesting to Highly Dramatic on the Human Interest Index (see Table 3). No books were classified as Dull and only 11 percent were considered interesting. Those rated as Highly Dramatic include: *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years* (1930), *The White Stag* (1938), *Miss Hickory* (1947), *Miracles on Maple Hill* (1957), *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (1961), *The Bronze Bow* (1962), *I, Juan de Pareja* (1966), *The Slave Dancer* (1974), *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (1986), and *Shiloh* (1992).

Table 3

A Summary of the Human Interest Index Classification of the Newbery Award-Winning Books

Number of Books	Human Interest Range	Human Interest Percent Range of Newbery Medal Books
0	Dull	0-19%
8	Interesting	20-39%
24	Highly Interesting	40-59%
29	Dramatic	60-74%
11	Highly Dramatic	75-95%

Although we recognize that readability formulae provide quantitative, objective estimates of text difficulty, results of this study provide teachers and librarians with a better understanding of the reading levels of the Newbery Award books as a guide for selecting quality literature at appropriate reading levels. In addition, selection with interestingness in mind should encourage independent and recreational reading.

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Appendix A

Human Interest Words (Long, 1991)

actress
adult
adults
anybody
anyone
aunt
babies

families
family
father
fathers
fellow
folks
friend

human
humans
husband
husbands
I
kid
lad

my
myself
nephew
nephews
niece
nieces
nobody

somebody
someone
son
sons
sweetheart
their
themselves

baby
boy
boys
brother
brothers
child
children
cousin
cousins
dad
daddy
friends
gentlemen
gentleman
girl
girls
grandfather
grandmother
guy
guys
he
her
ladies
lady
lass
madam
mama
man
me
men
mine
miss
mister
our
ourselves
pal
papa
parent
parents
people
person
persons
poppa
she
uncle
us
user
we
who
whoever
whom
wife
wives
woman
women

Appendix B

Readability Scores of Newbery Award Winners

Year	Title	Flesch Reading Ease Score	Flesch Grade Level Required	Percent Adults	Flesch Kincaid	Gunning Fog	Fry	Human Interest	Human Interest Range
1922	The Story of Mankind	55.3 Standard	10	83%	12.1	11.6	10	30%	Interesting
1923	The Voyages of Dr. Dolittle	72.1 Easy	6	91%	8.6	9.5	8	62%	Dramatic
1924	The Dark Frigate	73.4 Easy	6	91%	8.6	9.6	8	46%	Highly Interesting
1925	Tales from Silver Lands	74.5 Easy	6	91%	9.3	10.6	8	55%	Highly Interesting
1926	Shen of the Sea	87.6 Very Easy	5	92%	3.3	3.9	4	65%	Dramatic
1927	Smoky, The Cowhorse	71.5 Easy	6	91%	9.3	10.0	9	37%	Interesting
1928	Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon	70.2 Easy	7	89%	8.9	9.5	8	61%	Dramatic
1929	The Trumpeter of Krakow	58.6 Fairly Easy	9	85%	11.9	11.2	10	53%	Highly Interesting
1930	Hitty; Her First Hundred Years	73.3 Easy	6	91%	7.6	8.0	7	79%	Highly Dramatic
1931	The Cat Who Went to Heaven	79.8 Easy	6	91%	6.0	6.6	6	59%	Highly Interesting
1932	Waterless Mountain	83.5 Very Easy	5	92%	5.3	6.5	6	65%	Dramatic
1933	Young Fu of the Upper Uangtze	75.2 Easy	6	91%	5.9	6.2	7	54%	Highly Interesting
1934	Invincible Louisa	61.2 Fairly Easy	8	88%	10.6	10.9	9	59%	Highly Interesting
1935	Dobry	65.0 Fairly Easy	8	88%	9.1	9.0	8	32%	Interesting
1936	Caddie Woodlawn	76.0 Easy	6	91%	5.8	5.5	7	74%	Dramatic
1937	Roller Skates	65.8 Fairly Easy	8	88%	7.5	6.2	9	73%	Dramatic
1938	The White Stag	79.6 Easy	6	91%	7.6	8.8	6	77%	Highly Dramatic
1939	Thimble Summer	81.4 Very Easy	5	92%	4.4	4.9	5	53%	Highly Interesting
1940	Daniel Boone	65.6 Fairly Easy	8	88%	8.9	8.6	9	36%	Interesting
1941	Call It Courage	72.6 Easy	6	91%	6.7	6.1	7	47%	Highly Interesting
1942	The Matchlock Gun	88.3 Very Easy	5	92%	3.7	4.8	3	57%	Highly Interesting
1943	Adam of the Road	78.3 Easy	6	91%	6.4	6.8	7	68%	Dramatic
1944	Johnny Tremain	81.8 Very Easy	5	92%	4.2	4.4	5	62%	Dramatic
1945	Rabbit Hill	64.0 Fairly Easy	8	88%	7.9	6.8	8	60%	Dramatic

1946	Strawberry Girl	80.3 Easy	6	91%	5.1	5.4	4	73%	Dramatic
1947	Miss Hickory	80.0 Easy	6	91%	6.2	7.1	6	75%	Highly Dramatic
1948	The Twenty-One Balloons	70.5 Easy	7	89%	7.8	7.7	7	55%	Highly Interesting
1949	King of the Wind	81.2 Very Easy	5	92%	5.0	5.1	5	54%	Highly Interesting
1950	The Door in the Wall	82.6 Very Easy	5	92%	5.7	6.7	6	58%	Highly Interesting
1951	Amos Fortune, Free Man	66.6 Easy	7	89%	8.9	8.7	9	58%	Highly Interesting
1952	Ginger Pye	74.2 Easy	6	91%	7.7	8.5	7	59%	Highly Interesting
1953	Secret of the Andes	80.1 Easy	6	91%	5.0	4.9	5	48%	Highly Interesting
1954	...and now Miguel	82.9 Very Easy	5	92%	5.5	6.6	5	56%	Highly Interesting
1955	The Wheel on the School	87.1 Very Easy	5	92%	3.8	4.7	4	68%	Dramatic
1956	Carry on Mr. Bowditch	82.2 Very Easy	5	92%	3.8	3.8	4	71%	Dramatic
1957	Miracles on Maple Hill	84.2 Very Easy	5	92%	5.6	6.8	6	76%	Highly Dramatic
1958	Rifles for Watie	68.2 Easy	7	89%	7.9	7.5	8	57%	Highly Interesting
1959	The Witch of Blackbird Pond	77.3 Easy	6	91%	6.7	7.4	6	59%	Highly Interesting
1960	Onion John	83.5 Very Easy	5	92%	4.5	5.4	5	63%	Dramatic
1961	Island of the Blue Dolphin	85.3 Very Easy	5	92%	5.9	7.4	6	91%	Highly Dramatic
1962	The Bronze Bow	83.6 Very Easy	5	92%	4.3	4.9	4	95%	Highly Dramatic
1963	A Wrinkle In Time	80.2 Easy	6	91%	6.0	6.8	6	69%	Dramatic
1964	It's Like This, Cat	89.1 Very Easy	5	92%	4.5	6.2	6	57%	Highly Interesting
1965	Shadow of a Bull	89.6 Very Easy	5	92%	3.4	4.7	4	74%	Dramatic
1966	I, Juan de Pareja	74.2 Easy	6	91%	7.8	8.3	7	84%	Highly Dramatic
1967	Up A Road Slowly	63.6 Fairly Easy	8	88%	9.0	8.8	9	72%	Dramatic
1968	From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler	74.3 Easy	6	91%	5.7	5.9	7	71%	Dramatic
1969	The High King	75.3 Easy	6	91%	6.6	6.6	6	71%	Dramatic
1970	Sounder	78.4 Easy	6	91%	7.0	7.9	7	59%	Highly Interesting
1971	Summer of the Swans	78.7 Easy	6	91%	5.6	5.6	5	73%	Dramatic
1972	Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH	76.7 Easy	6	91%	6.2	7.1	7	60%	Dramatic
1973	Julie of the Wolves	79.3 Easy	6	91%	5.6	6.0	6	33%	Interesting
1974	The Slave Dancer	77.3 Easy	6	91%	6.1	6.3	6	82%	Highly Dramatic
1975	M. C. Higgins, the Great	89.2 Very Easy	5	92%	3.9	5.2	4	62%	Dramatic
1976	The Grey King	77.3 Easy	6	91%	6.6	7.1	8	23%	Interesting
1977	Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry	68.4 Easy	7	89%	9.0	8.7	8	53%	Highly Interesting

1978	Bridge to Terabithia	83.3 Very Easy	5	92%	5.2	6.2	6	71%	Dramatic
1979	The Westing Game	59.0 Fairly Easy	9	85%	8.9	8.1	10	48%	Highly Interesting
1980	A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal 1830-32	81.1 Very Easy	5	92%	5.7	6.1	7	65%	Dramatic
1981	Jacob Have I Loved	71.8 Easy	6	91%	7.5	7.8	7	64%	Dramatic
1982	A Visit to William Blake's Inn: Poems for Innocent and Experienced Travelers	89.3 Very Easy	5	92%	1.9	1.9	2	56%	Highly Interesting
1983	Dicey's Song	78.6 Easy	6	91%	5.3	5.6	6	53%	Highly Interesting
1984	Dear Mr. Henshaw	86.3 Very Easy	5	92%	4.3	5.8	5	89%	Highly Dramatic
1985	The Hero and the Crown	71.6 Easy	6	91%	8.3	8.8	7	63%	Dramatic
1986	Sarah, Plain and Tall	79.4 Easy	6	91%	5.9	6.5	6	84%	Highly Dramatic
1987	The Whipping Boy	82.0 Very Easy	5	92%	4.4	4.3	5	39%	Interesting
1988	Lincoln: A Photobiography	62.9 Fairly Easy	8	88%	8.9	8.3	9	68%	Dramatic
1989	Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices	96.9 Very Easy	4	93%	0.4	2.1	1	62%	Dramatic
1990	Number the Stars	74.1 Easy	6	91%	6.2	6.1	7	61%	Dramatic
1991	Maniac McGee	75.5 Easy	6	91%	6.5	6.9	7	33%	Interesting
1992	Shiloh	91.0 Very Easy	4	93%	3.4	4.7	4	90%	Highly Dramatic
1993	Missing May	81.2 Very Easy	5	92%	6.0	6.7	6	70%	Dramatic

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Resources for Making Educational Decisions Regarding the Selection of Multicultural Materials
A Ready Resource of References Taken from Infotract, 1993

Kathleen Evans, V. Suzanne Brandon Smith, Carrey Sayles

Requisite to any decision regarding the selection of multiculture literature, we, as teachers must consider our audience, their prior knowledge, their social needs, and the ramifications of the selected literature on them as citizens. The intent of this article is to provide resources and possible classroom activities geared to enhance multicultural decision-making. We emphasize that the purpose of this article is to facilitate elevating future teachers' awareness of the issues and interactions of multiculturalism through readings and classroom activities. It is not the purpose of this article to prescribe a set regimen for teaching.

Prioritizing Issues

Multicultural awareness seems essential to productively coping with the opportunities afforded all of us through technological developments and sociological changes. As Barrera, Liguori, and Salas (1992) point out, educational choices in the past have not promoted this awareness.

> A historical look at U. S. children's literature from the point of view of diversity indicates that cultural homogeneity and insularity have been the norm traditionally, with the range of experience portrayed in children's books mostly confined to that of the dominant society and culture. Such a pattern, of course, does not promote multicultural thinking and development. (p. 206)

Literature is the total of preserved writings belonging to a given language or people. It constitutes a sizeable portion of the history of that people. Multicultural literature refers to juxtaposing the literatures of two or more cultures. The process of selecting materials to represent the history, art, and teachings of a culture is not a trivial one. Trexel (1992) points out the investments involved.

> Close examination of the controversies surrounding political correctness and multiculturalism in art, literature, and curriculum in general reveals that they are centrally concerned with how we define ourselves as individuals and understand our nation's past, present, and future possibilities. Because these controversies involve issues that simultaneously are aesthetic, relate to questions of historical interpretation, and often involve myths that are basic to this country's beliefs about itself, they are profoundly political and increasingly contentious. (p. 4)

We stress the need to be very careful in selecting what to teach. We have a responsibility to the cultures to represent them truthfully. This matter of authenticity is addressed by Barrera, Liguori, and Salas (1992).

> From the standpoint of multicultural education, authenticity of content and images in children's literature is essential because unauthentic representation subverts the very cultural awareness and understanding that such literature can build. Literary license cannot be invoked as justification for the misrepresentation of other cultures, not even in works of fiction. Makers of the literature have a social responsibility to portray cultural groups authentically; anything less is ignorance at best, or racism, at worst. (pp. 212.213)

While educators often argue that authenticity can only be awarded to actual members of a given culture, anthropologists, sociologists, and naturalistic researchers have shown that a culture can be learned and understood by non-native observers.

Another aspect of selection is that some stories are cross-cultural. Barrera, et al. (1992) point out an example.

> In *I Speak English for My Mom*, a work of fiction, Stanek portrays in an insightful and balanced manner a common reality in the life of many immigrant or first-generation students in this country having to serve as the English voice for their parents and family in many social situations within the dominant society. (p. 217)

If some consensus could be reached on these issues, what are incentives for authors, publishers, and teachers to thoughtfully adhere to these negotiated standards or, at least, to become aware of the issues and viewpoints and to make conscious choices according to their own convictions?

Bibliographical Resources

We offer, as one of the mediating steps in fostering educators' (teachers, authors, publishers) responsibility, this resource of articles relevant to foundational considerations. We have organized the bibliographical entries into subcategories to help the novice in recognizing issues. For example, what is culture? What is subculture? What is ethnicity? What is authenticity? In an effort to help future teachers arrive at answers to these questions, we have compiled a section of "Definitions and Terms Clarification."

We have sorted out a section on problem analysis as it relates to certain dynamics of multiculturalism. We have tried to include articles of various perspectives in an effort to offer a balanced presentation given that individual articles in some cases, do present a specific point of view.

Clearly there are religious and ethical issues at stake—historical, political, and social trajectories a responsible educator is obliged to consider. There also are practical applications and curricular aspects to consider. Altogether, we have created 16 categories, and the bibliographical entries for each category are listed in Appendix A. The categories are not exhaustive, rigid, or exclusive. For example, there are several entries which appear germane to two or more categories. Social issues can be considered from a political point of view, from an ethical perspective, or historically.

Cultural Literacy

Cultural authenticity requires an in-depth awareness of the fixed customs and the folkways of a cultural group and an understanding of the ethical significance of these conventions. In selecting materials for teaching multiculturalism, the future teacher needs to have adequate awareness to determine that the material chosen is authentic. In order for a piece to reflect cultural authenticity, the author of that piece must not misrepresent that cultures' mores.

Curriculum Issues

Cultural issues encompass the implementation of specific materials in the classroom, issues of audience, authenticity, what works, politics of the school environment, the change process, text books, etc. For future teachers to be productive in their efforts to teach multicultural issues, they must be aware of the learning environment of the students and of strategies for dealing with the existing curriculum.

Definitions and Terms Clarification

Basic to the understanding of a field of information is knowing the major terms used. What is the relationship between multiculturalism and pluralism? How does ethnicity interact with nationalism? What is secular humanism? What is culture? To understand the issues involved in teaching multiculturally, future teachers must have working knowledge of the terms involved.

Ethics

In a pluralistic society, the question of ethics is a very practical problem. How do different subcultures interact? Are there overriding values which all citizens honor? Future teachers need to become aware of their personal ethics, the national and regional ethics, and how to deal with these ethical issues in the selection of multicultural materials to be used in the classroom.

Freedom of Speech

In a homogeneous culture, there can be a single standard for a given freedom. People with the same cultural background can sooner come to agreement on the point at which individual freedom must give way to public welfare. The questions of verbal harassment and hate speech bring this issue to the fore. In teaching to and about a variety of cultures, the future teacher needs to know more about these boundaries.

Historical Issues

Multiculturalism requires teachers to reexamine recorded history. Each subculture tells history from its vantage point. These differing perspectives present problems to be negotiated. .History and anthropology can be very informative in dealing with multicultural issues.

Pluralism, Humanism, New World Order

In the political arena, pluralism refers to the interaction of different cultural segments under the same national government. Humanism is a philosophical approach to dealing with people of varied backgrounds. The new world order refers to social interactions on a world level. These three concepts focus on cooperative social interactions. Questions of how separate cultures can exist in one country are very useful in dealing with multicultural representation in the classroom. Part of adequately preparing children in multicultural awareness is to acquaint them with present considerations of political reconstruction.

U. S. Politics and Power

Implicit in the way we teach multiculturalism are many issues of politics and power. How powers are delegated to such groups as physicians, lawyers, insurance companies, pressure groups and what powers remain to the discretion of the individual need to be examined. The issues of social reconstruction and how they apply to the classroom are important if we are to reaffirm the democratic ideal on which this country was founded. Future teachers need to acquaint themselves with these issues.

Practical Applications in the Workplace
Cross-Cultural Understandings

The authenticity of multicultural education lies in its transferability into the human interactions in the classroom, in the community, and in the workplace. The future teacher who is cognizant of issues, transactions, and options in these arenas equips himself in the task of making education relevant.

Problems Analysis

At this point in history, the question of multicultural awareness and respect underlies so many of the cultural, political, and educational issues. Educators have an exquisite opportunity to help learners become problem-solvers in matters that have practical application in their own lives and, simultaneously, shape the learner's world view.

Religious Issues

Since the 1960s, there has been an emphasis in separating school and religious issues. While there appears to be little sign of change in this position, classroom teachers will be confronted with religious issues when teaching multicultural materials. To make choices which avoid these issues would be to opt for a certain lack of authenticity. For future teachers to make responsible choices regarding selection of material as well as in their fielding questions and moderating classroom discussion, they need to be aware of the relationship of religious matters to multicultural education.

Research

Research in the field of multicultural education is presently scarce. Nonetheless, it is an invaluable area of investigation for the future teacher who tries to make cognitive choices. Ideological foundations are further refined by the results and implications of actual research.

Sexual Preference and Ethnicity

The issue of whether sexual preference is part of multiculturalism has many pervasive consequences. Future teachers need to learn the ramifications of choosing to include or exclude materials reflecting sexual orientation in their multicultural teaching.

Sub-Cultures and Regional Aspects

Certain issues and aspects of multiculturalism are of greater relevance in a given geographic area. Future teachers need to gain some awareness of sub-cultural issues that particularly pertain to their specific teaching arenas.

Value of Ethnicity, Tribes, Families

Are there basic building blocks of humanity? Do human beings naturally group themselves? What are the parameters involved in grouping? Are they fixed or discretionary? Does grouping determine culture? The depth of these questions may go beyond the needs of future teachers. Still, some understandings of the social ramifications of race, national heritage, and family structures are invaluable in foreseeing audience response.

World View

We are in an age of collapsing and consolidating boundaries—geographic, political, moral, ethical, and personal. In this world in which telecommunications are so readily available to the individual, we run the risk of losing the valuable boundaries, that separate cultures and create the diversity which enriches our lives in numerous ways.

Just as an understanding of local issues is invaluable to future teachers, being acquainted with global views is equally relevant.

Selected Instructional Activities

In the classroom the suggested, and other, multicultural readings may be selected and studied in a variety of ways. The teacher has the opportunity to use activities involving alternative loci of control, such as group discussion, cooperative learning, or individual investigation. We suggest using several different activities to help your students fully develop their multicultural awareness.

Used as an introductory data gathering structure or as a culminating activity, a study guide can help these future teachers focus and organize the material (see Table 1).

Table 1
Study Guide

Historical - Evaluation

What are the historical events related to this issue?
Give some examples of intercultural adjustments.

Philosophical - Aims

What constitutes a culture? a subculture?
What are the aims of intercultural adjustments?
Which aims are desirable?

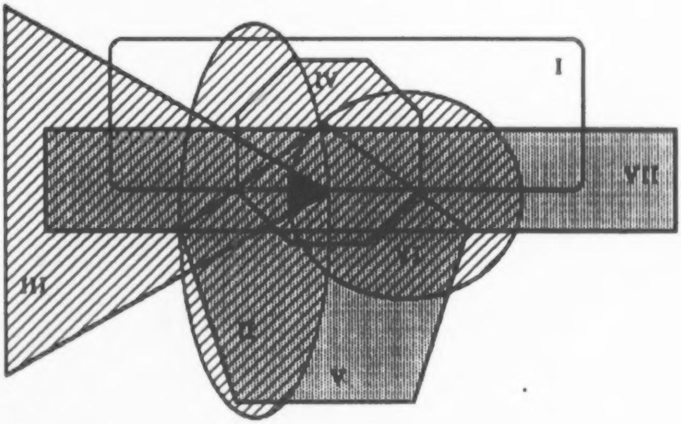
Social - Systems

What are causes of intercultural adjustments?
What problems arise in intercultural adjustments?
What are the underlying mechanisms operating within the problems?
How are these mechanisms dismantled in the interest of cultural conglomeration?
What accommodations to subculture are appropriately made in the educational environment?

Psychological - Instructional Activities

What are distinctive acculturations of individuals from specific cultures?
How are these values best accommodated in the learning environment?

Once the educator has a grasp of issues, it is appropriate to deal with dynamics. (We do not mean to be implying a rigid division between the two, since construct building usually goes back and forth between data-gathering and association-making.) We suggest that the educator make a graphic representation of the culture, subculture, and interest groups in which a person, he/she knows well, belongs. The educator is asked to define (or quote the definition of his/her choice) the terms used in the graph. The graphic representation could be color-coded as to culture, subcultures, and interest groups. Included would be a key and a brief verbal profile of the individual described in the graphic presentation (See Figure 1).



☐ Culture = the group to which a person avows his/her greatest resources

■ Subculture = a group that can be a culture but is, for this person, a lesser influence

▨ Interest group = arena for influencing cultures or for spending one's resources

I. Believes in The One Most High God
II. Heterosexual
III. Political activist for homeopathic health care
IV. Extended family
V. English speaking
VI. Over 50 years of age
VII. Allegiance to resident nation, "homeland"

Figure 1. Graphic Representation and Explanation

We also offer a culminating activity (See Table 2).

Table 2
Semantic Mapping

Arrange a semantic map which explains each of these terms and relates each to other terms. You may add terms, use color-coding and create a key to explain the meaning of colors, shapes, and directionals.

assimilation
community
cultural heritage
cultural holism
ethnicity
family
humanism
humanistic universalism
multiculturalism
nationalism
new world order
religion
tribe
value
virtue

Conclusion

Today's future teachers are in the position of making history happen through the way in which they teach multicultural literature. What these future teachers present to their students will influence the students' perceptions of the world and of people they will meet throughout their lives. What these students learn will determine how they as future citizens interact with each other. Multiculturalism is, in part, processed through multicultural literature. The future teachers who learn the issues and make responsible classroom choices best empower their students to live successfully.

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Appendix A

Bibliographic Resources

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Problems Court: Now we've decided to stop blaming the victims for failure in reading, how must we change our conception of "remedial reading"?

Wayne Otto, David J. Gustafson, Kenneth M. Smith, Roger G. Eldridge

(The question posed above was addressed in a Problems Court session at the 1993 meeting of the American Reading forum. What follows is a recap of the proceedings.)

I. Posing The Question

Back in the good old days, we professors knew what to cover when the course title had "Remedial Reading" in it. First we'd talk *diagnosis*. We'd lead off with some carefully chosen remarks about the intricacies of assessment, follow with a dazzling discussion of esoterica like (shudder) *standard error of measurement* and (tremble) *reliability coefficients,* and close with a stupefying display of an endless array of diagnostic tests. Then, with diagnosis out of the way, we'd turn to *remediation*. What we'd focus on here—and there was lots to focus on—was materials, *remedial material*; exercises for developing underdeveloped skills that ranged from sounding out the silent schwa to extracting the main idea from the Dolch word list. We knew exactly what the field was, and we covered it. Sometimes in one semester (diagnosis, then remediation); sometimes in two (Diagnosis in the fall, Remediation in the spring).

Carefree days, those were; we knew our job, and we did it. Our job was to provide remediation to those poor souls who needed to be remediated. Never mind that *disabled* readers almost never got *enabled*. The name of the game was remediation and we played it by the rules.

But then, ever so softly at first, we began to hear some discordant whispers. Whispers of words like *materials driven, skills in isolation, workbooks and word lists and drills, oh my* . . . We ignored the whispers at first; but as the voices got more strident, we had to listen. The voices were telling us lots of things, but they were mainly variations on a single theme: *You're blaming the victims! Why are you blaming the victims?*

And when we looked around us, we knew that the voices were right. We knew, too, that the question—Why are you blaming the victims?—was a good one because we didn't have any sensible answers handy. "Because it's easier to blame them than to accept the blame ourselves," seemed a little bit too glib.

One thing was clear, though: The good old days were gone forever. If we couldn't blame the kids for their reading failure, we'd have to start thinking about the ways in which schools and schooling are to blame for the failure. Not only that, but we'd have to rethink the entire context and the content for remedial reading.

The *purpose* of this Problems Court, then, was to provide a forum for thinking together about the future of remedial reading. Given the social, cultural and educational realities of the day, is there a reasonably clear role and function for remedial reading? Assuming—at least tentatively—that there is, then the *objective* of the proposed Problems Court is to stimulate discussion of what the content of a college level methods course with "remedial reading" in its title or description ought, most legitimately, to be.

II. Wayne Otto: Sharing A Syllabus For A "Remedial Reading" Course

Wayne Otto shared his syllabus for Remedial Reading, a graduate-level course that he offers every spring. The shared syllabus was for Spring 1993; the one given here is for Spring 1994. Things *do* change . . . at least a little. Otto pointed out some of the ways that the course has evolved in the nearly-half-a-century that he's been teaching it:

As reflected in the objectives, there's less blame-the-victim rhetoric; the scope of concern is broadened from reading to literacy; there's less emphasis on formal tests and testing; there's much less emphasis on canned materials; there's much more concern for nurturing literate behavior in a wide variety of contexts.

There's a text, but it serves more as a reference and point-of-departure than as a repository for everything-you-need-to-know.

Everybody gets to read some real books and to talk about them in ways that relate to each person's personal stories.

There's much more reliance on students' reactions to assigned readings (as given in the syllabus and augmented by frequent handouts addressing controversial issues related to the topics) and much less reliance on the professor as THE source of information.

There's much more questioning of formal tests and test-related procedures. **But**—because tests and testing are still very much in evidence in the schools—there is time devoted to familiarization with the specifics of commonly-used tests and testing procedures.

Rather than prepare for a FINAL EXAM, students in the course are asked, instead, to articulate their personal stories to share them, and to reflect on mismatches between their old stories and the new ones that they encounter in class.

The intent, of course, is to provide an environment where a constructivist approach to the acquisition of knowledge (and the modification of prior knowledge) is practiced and valued. The hope is that students will go back to their own classrooms with a stronger inclination to take a constructivist stance when they approach their students. Once students are viewed as (potentially) active participants in and contributors to their own learning, it's hard to approach them as objects to be remediated.

Otto's syllabus is offered in Appendix A (with trepidation) not as a model but as a basis for critique and discussion.

III. David J. Gustafson. Rethinking The Content Of Remedial Reading

David Gustafson shared some of his thoughts—concerns as well as insights—as he contemplated his own future as a "remedial reading professor." His reflections:

In our proposal for the 1994 ARF conference, Wayne Otto set up the focus of our Problems Court presentation:

One thing was clear though: The good old days were gone forever. If we couldn't blame kids for their reading failure, we'd have to start thinking about the ways in which schools and schooling are to blame for the failure. Not only that, but we'd have to rethink the entire context and the content for remedial reading.

My first reactions was to call Wayne and tell him that it was time that he and Diane took a long cruise—like around the world! (I'd even take up a collection!) I thought why can't this guy just let things progress at their own slow pace. No, instead he had to strike a nerve and ask exactly what we were doing and how were we doing it. Judge Roy Bean, the hanging judge, had more finesse! With that said, there was only one way to go: take a look at what I was doing and determine where changes were needed. In the remaining portion of this paper I will describe my present practice and the changes that I will be pursuing.

Where I Am

Each fall I offer a graduate-level Remedial Reading course worth three semester credits. Class size ranges from 15 to 25 and most are veteran teachers though it is fairly common to have a few recent graduates who are pursuing a Special Reading License or a Masters degree in Special Education. My text in 1993 was M. Lipson, & K. Wixson (1991). *Assessment & Instruction of Reading Disability*. New York, NY: Harper-Collins. It is centered around six major sections: (a) Perspectives; (b) Evaluating the learner; (c) Evaluating the reading context; (d) Interactions; (e) Instruction; and (f) The reading professional. There are two major reasons for my selection of this text: (a) Its focus is on current thought regarding the interaction between text, reader, and context and not on "What's wrong with the kid?"; and (b) the authors include many usable activities, charts, tests, etc., that my students can apply directly in their classrooms. Unfortunately many students find it a bit dense and overwhelming since many still carry the idea that one is supposed to know everything in the text rather than to view it as a resource.

Over the years I have switched from a 100% lecture to about a 30% lecture/70% discussion and interactive format. Students are divided into groups of four, and various assignments involving observations and applications are made weekly. Approximately 30 minutes are allotted at the beginning of each class period for the groups to get together, discuss, and share experiences. One person from each group then shares an experience with the whole group. I haven't been satisfied with the results of these groups mainly due to the fact that there is such a wide range of insightfulness among the students. This condition seems to be akin to that found by Camperell (1991) when she found her secondary majors could not summarize an author's basic argument contained in a chapter and instead could only relate based upon personal beliefs and experience. Some of my students do the same and seem unable to analyze another person's teaching except superficially.

Where I find myself now as an instructor is on a plateau situated above where I have been in the past, and still below the mountain top. Maybe one never gets there in a lifetime; but then again, maybe it is all in the climb. My greatest dissatisfaction seems to be one of organization. At times it seems that there is such a great assortment of teaching strategies available such as cooperative learning, case study method, discussion, and the numerous reading strategies, that instead of centering on one or a few and integrating them, I find myself moving from one to another. The results tend to come across to students as a seemingly disorganized approach though it may be quite well organized in my head. Then again, it might be just a figment of my imagination (No comments requested on this last statement). In summary, as I look at what others are attempting, I believe that I can make improvements in my teaching that will result in my students becoming more effective teachers and better enablers of their students. Wayne Otto pointed in the conference proposal: "Never mind that *disabled* readers almost never got *enabled*. The name of the game was remediation and we played it by the rules." The rules have changed and they must be faced.

Where I am Going

As was stated in the introduction, one of the things that needs to be addressed is the context of remedial reading. By context here I mean the context of my university classroom. Much of the instruction of remedial reading in the schools is undergoing massive change as Chapter I teachers are switching from pull-out to inclusion programs throughout the country. From my viewpoint this change is not an easy one. It has great impact not only on what these teachers are doing, but also on how they are doing it and how they are being taught in university classrooms. The model being stressed today is one of greater collaboration and constructivist thinking. That is the target.

Brooks and Brooks (1993), in their book *The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*, stated the problem clearly in their Foreword: ". . . in order for learning to take place in schools, teachers must become constructivist, that is, in the classroom, they must provide a learning environment where students reach for meaning, appreciate uncertainty, and inquire responsibly" (p. v). This philosophy is directed related to our current thoughts about the reading process as being a constructivist process. It seems to me that as university professors, when we look at the results of our instruction, we have not developed constructivist thinkers, but rather have developed manual followers and the like.

At this juncture of my career, after 21 years of teaching Remedial Reading, I find myself literally thirsting for knowledge about what actually goes on in remedial reading classes (and others) in the schools. This has resulted in my securing development leave for Spring, 1995 to visit schools K-12 in the company of the Wisconsin Department of Public personnel on school audits in Wisconsin, and to visit a few professors who are trying new things around the country. I plan to visit three members of ARF: Kay Camperell of Utah State, Roger Eldridge of Northern Colorado, and, hopefully, Victoria Risko of Vanderbilt University. My main focus on all three is their use of the case method. Risko (1991, 1992) has taken the case method into the world of computers in her development and study of Videodisc-based case methodology with gratifying results.

As our remedial reading teachers are being asked to collaborate with teachers both in and out of the classroom, we also must collaborate with out students to a greater degree. We must be the models if we expect the remedial readers should have teachers who collaborate with them. We know that we can't just fill kids' heads with skills or strategies (to be politically correct) and expect them to be enabled. We need to get them actively involved in learning rather than being receptacles of knowledge.

In closing, I believe the following quotation from Smith and MacGregor (1992) offers a clear picture of where I am an the questions that must be faced by all of us:

> And designing collaborate learning situations requires a demanding yet important rethinking of one's syllabus, in terms of course content and time allocation. If some (or a great deal) of the classroom time is considered an important social space for developing understandings about course material, or if some of the out-of-class time is devoted to study groups or group projects, how then should the rest of the class rime (lectures, assignments, examinations) be designed? How does the teacher ensure that students are learning and mastering key skills and ideas in the course, while at the same time addressing all the material of the course? Teaching in collaborative settings puts the tension between the process of student learning and content coverage front and center. (p. 20)

IV. Kenneth M. Smith. Selected Issues Related To Current Diagnostic And Remedial Instruction

Ken Smith thought about some of the issues that are raised by changing beliefs, assumptions and practices in the reading/literacy field. His reflections:

Selected Issues Related to Current Diagnostic and Remedial Instruction*

As professors teaching diagnosis and remedial reading courses, we have in recent years experienced the impact on our students of major philosophical and curricular changes and debates in the field of literacy education (Spiegel, 1994). Based on my observations and experiences, a number of issues must be addressed in our courses and by our students as they meet their professional expectations as reading specialists.

Of primary importance is one's view of the reading/literacy process. How does it all evolve in a student? Without a personal and operational understanding of this process, one cannot begin the assessment, diagnosis, evaluation or instruction of student literacy. In the past, the development of reading, writing, listening, speaking, study skills and thinking/problem-solving strategies were often viewed as separate areas for instructional and diagnostic/remedial activity. Reading specialists and the teachers with whom they work may not have had much training in nurturing writing processes. Spelling, listening, and speaking may have been seen as processes distanced from reading, and, while using good children's literature was seen as important, it was also somehow distanced from the direct instruction of reading. With more holistic or literature-based approaches to literacy instruction much of that has changed, but our diagnostic/remedial procedures also are changing. We now focus more on authentic, performance or outcomes-based assessment techniques and, through a variety of portfolio evaluation strategies, we attempt to assess those tasks, behaviors or strategies we value and not attend to that which we do not value (Anthony, Johnson Mickelson & Preece, 1991; Glazer & Brown, 1993; Manzo & Manzo, 1993; Tierney, Carter & Desai, 1991; Valencia, Heibert & Afflerback, 1994).

Norm-referenced, nationally standardized testing has been hit hard by opponents who point out how focusing on skills in isolation and comparing students' performance on those skills is totally inappropriate given the holistic philosophies and the desirability of authentic, performance-based assessment mentioned before (Marzano, Pickering

& McTighe, 1993; Paris, et al., 1992; Wiggins, 1993). Perhaps, however, the extreme move to reject all standardized, norm-referenced tests denies some of the needs that still exist; students, teachers, parents, administrators, school boards, state departments and legislators still have to answer a variety of comparative and accountability questions. How *do* students' literacy achievement and attitudes in our school compare to students' achievement and attitudes in other schools in the district or state and not just to the state's established standards. Intelligence testing and a variety of other specific normative data are required by state and federal requirements as students are evaluated for IEP or TAG eligibility (Lerner, 1993; Overton, 1992; Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1991; Teale, 1993). Chapter I legislation and resulting regulations, even with pending reauthorization, will continue to require screening and service selection modes which require comparative student achievement data. Even in those states moving to state-wide outcomes based assessment, questions remain about where the levels of appropriately high standards for students will be set and, then, how each state's results compare to other states. Such questions beg to be answered.

Another trend is that reading specialists are working more with other teachers and specialists in a collaborative way rather than with individual students or small groups in a pull-out format. This teaming focus might also include parents, counselors, or special educators, as well as medical specialists, mental health, public health and juvenile corrections professionals. Supervision of paraprofessionals and in-service work will continue to be an important focus as the trend toward inclusion of those on IEP's and receiving special literacy assistance continues. Because of budget pressures, this is especially true at the secondary level. Whether the trend toward employing paraprofessionals as complete instructors for students with special literacy needs is healthy for our profession and the real needs of students served is open to considerable discussion. Reading specialists will be required to explain various views of the development of literacy; how outcomes are assessed; and how personalized remedial instruction can take place given the various languages, contests, and conceptions of literacy strategies and roles that various individuals in these collaborative groups possess.

Another observation I'd like to share has to do with the changing role of the reading specialist at the secondary level. There are many teachers in junior and senior high schools who had very little course work or experience dealing with the developmental stages of literacy or how to nurture literate behavior in specific content areas. As things *are*, selected study skills may receive some emphasis; and teachers may have had some exposure to the writing across the curriculum concept. As more schools focus on workplace literacy, basic literacy, and interpersonal and thinking/problem-solving skills necessary for success in various career tracks, reading specialists will have new opportunities to be of service to teachers who may have felt that they were irrelevant except to teach students skills they should have learned in elementary school. The challenge will be to use diagnostic and assessment strategies that are seen to be relevant in the performance-based context of various content areas and evolving career fields (Tonjes, 1991; Vacca & Vacca, 1993).

Other issues of emerging importance revolve around the use of distance education (both two-way and/or one-way video and audio instructional delivery systems), computer conferencing networks, advanced research and literature searching, interactive video and other disks usage, and related computer technology. As we gather vast amounts of information for portfolios, observations of students, data on tests, grades, personal student records, samples of papers, photographs, projects, rubric assessment information, and other information, technology permits us to keep personal cumulative records on students in a much more comprehensive way than we have done before. Scanners can store on disk stacks of records, protocols, response logs and papers in organized ways that were almost impossible to keep track of in the not-too-distant past. This will affect the amount and type of diagnostic and assessment information that is available and current. Reading specialists may be able to have clinical conferences with specialists who are at some distance in which visual and report data can be shared. Interactive computer networks can allow a great deal of communication between reading specialists in ways that save time for all involved. The reality of a super internet highway is here and we reading specialists can help provide ways to use it to help our research, diagnoses, teaching, and sharing of cases.

Finally, a wide variety of additional references and resources are available for our current efforts in diagnostic and remedial work with reading specialists (e.g., Collins & Cheek, 1993; Harris & Sipay, 1990; Lipson & Wixson, 1991; Phinney, 1988; Rhodes & Shanklin, 1993; Routman, 1991; Walker, 1992). The knowledgeable use of informal reading inventories will also continue to be helpful (e.g., Ekwall & Shanker, 1993; Flynt & Cooter, 1993; Johns, 1991; Leslie & Caldwell, 1990; Rhodes, 1993; Stieglitz, 1992).

*The author would like to thank Julie E. Smith, a local reading specialist, who took time to provide thoughtful critique and editorial comment.

V. Roger G. Eldridge: The New Victim In Remedial Reading

The question the Problems Court panel members addressed was: "Now that we've decided to stop blaming the victims for failure in reading how must we change our conception of remedial reading"? Panel members and audience participants engaged in a lively discussion, but conclusions and closure around the question were not realized. The "problem" is large and complex and a ninety minute discussion appeared to produce much frustration and few ready-made solutions. A few participants wondered aloud whether society has, in fact, ceased blaming students for reading failure. No one in the audience chose to pursue this thought.

After one panel member provided the audience with a brief overview and the syllabus for his own current graduate remedial reading course, the audience revealed a new victim of remedial reading—the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher may not be a *new* victim, but the teacher continues to receive more and more criticism for the reading problems and failures that exist in our children's schools. Of course one way to help these new victims to overcome their victimization is to provide them with sufficient preparation to handle students exhibiting reading difficulties. The ensuing discussion, by panel members and the audience, never did address the changing conception of remedial reading but was almost exclusively directed toward the university preparation of prospective teachers of reading. Several participants raised questions about their own university's commitment to quality teacher preparation programs.

Several members of the audience lamented that administrators of their university teacher preparation programs are recommending a reduction in the number of methods courses, and in particular reading methods courses, that prospective teachers must take to complete a teacher preparation program. Other audience members chimed in to say that the teacher education programs at their universities do not provide sufficient field-based experiences for prospective teachers to learn how to help readers who have difficulties with reading. Questions one could raise concerning these two positions are: Is there a magic number of reading courses prospective teachers should or must take? Is one course too little? Are three courses too many? How many field-based experiences are enough? No consensus concerning the answers to these questions was reached. One fact seemed to be self-evident: Little research is available to provide even tentative answers to any of these questions.

Some participants argued for more coursework in reading; this argument was countered by a few calls from other participants for fewer reading courses. Those individuals arguing for more reading courses in teacher preparation programs seemed to base their positions on the idea that there is a vast amount of content knowledge of reading that teachers must have in order to teach reading. This argument appears to follow the notion that *more is better*. On the other hand, one panel member opposed to the more is better argument suggested that one reading course may be too many. The gist of the latter argument took the route that attainment of knowledge in the vacuum of a university classroom, apart from actual readers experiencing problems, was a disservice to the prospective teachers and the students they would soon be serving. Other opponents to the more is better argument seemed to maintain that there is a limited amount of content knowledge in the field of reading and that one course is sufficient to cover the field. Additional courses, the argument continued, would only be variations of the first course.

Reflecting on the two positions, I believe the point was missed by both groups of people. The point that each group was making, albeit indirectly, was that the remedial reading teacher is the victim, victimized by professors of reading. Evidence abounds that society, in general, and professional educators, in particular, do not trust the teacher preparation programs now in place to produce competent teachers of reading. If the trust were there, then university faculties would not be engaged in the wholesale revision of teacher preparation programs, particularly the reading methods courses and instruction that have been integral parts of the programs.

Can newly created university teacher preparation programs and the professors of remedial reading courses hope to provide prospective teachers with enough knowledge and skill to eradicate reading problems in both emerging and advanced readers? I believe no number of university reading courses can prepare an individual to handle*all* of the elements of reading instruction, thereby eliminating the reading problems that currently exist in our schools. The remedial reading program is too complex to be eliminated simply by creating new teacher preparation programs. Teachers, either novices or experienced teachers, will continue to be the target of critics' attacks when children fail to learn to read, regardless of the new preparation programs. More than likely, the attacks will focus more directly on the university preparation the teachers receive. In the minds of many critics of our university teacher preparation programs, no matter what reading preparation the classroom teachers receive, that preparation at the university will never be appropriate or sufficient to teach all children to read.

I contend that the amount of preparation prospective teachers receive at the university is not the significant feature in all the arguments about remedial reading instruction. I believe that teachers' commitment to children (where the teachers exhibit a willingness to get to know each student and converse with that student) coupled with the teachers' ability to focus instruction on what the student can produce and to expand instruction to include skills, strategies, and content will lead to effective reading instruction. Such commitment by many teachers could reduce the number of remedial readers in our schools; such success would cause the critics of teacher preparation programs to reflect positively upon the teachers and the university programs. Arguments about more or fewer reading courses or more or fewer field-based experiences, then, would be moot.

VI. Reprise

Eldridge's comments, which accurately convey the gist of the discussion, reflect an interesting turn of events: The panelists talked about ways in which the prevailing blame the victims—the children who are the recipients of remedial teaching—stance might be changed and more positive practices and aspirations put in place. Those concerns were completely ignored in the discussion that followed. The discussion turned out to be a kind of catharsis, an outpouring of defenses and insecurities. Almost nothing was said about the intent and practice of remedial methods courses; instead, almost all of the discussion revolved around the question of how-much-is-enough when it comes to reading courses for prospective teachers. There were expressions of alarm over perceived cutbacks in programs, in terms of money, resources and credit hours allocated. The general consensus was that *more* is better than *some* when the question is: How many reading courses do prospective reading teachers need?

But, of course, that wasn't the question that was posed to the Problems Court. A cynic might say that the turn of events should come as no surprise, that discussions of educational issues always turn out to be either a forlorn defense of existing turf or pitched battles between seekers of turf. Issues be damned.

Cynic or not, the turn in the discussion says more about the state of remedial reading and the stance of the professors who teach the methods courses than does anything that the panelists presented. The victim is dead; long live the victim!

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Appendix

Otto's Syllabus

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Professor Wayne Otto 272-504, Remedial Reading
Spring 1994

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives for the course are:

- To develop the notion that *literacy* isn't just "getting the words right" any more.
- To examine alternatives to the blame-the-victim mentality of traditional approaches to "remediation" of "reading/learning disability."
- To examine the role of personal and program related factors in literacy development.
- To develop thoughtful approaches to assessing literacy in varied contexts.
- To develop a conceptual base for viewing the role of and reasons for pursuing the development of *specific* and *strategic* knowledge across the curriculum.

- To examine the role and function of special programs and specialized teachers in reaching students with "reading/learning disabilities".

TEXT

The primary text for the course is:

Harris, A. J. & Sipay, E. R. (1990). *How to Increase Reading Ability: A Guide to Developmental and Remedial Methods*, 9th ed. Longman.

You may choose ONE book from List A and ONE book from List B.

List A: Cunningham, P. M. (1991). *Phonics They Use: Words for Reading and Writing*. Harper Collins.

Edelsky, C., Altweager, B. & Flores, B. (1991). *Whole Language: What's the Difference?* Heinemann.

Hirsch, E. D. (1987). *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. Houghton Mifflin.

List B: Gaines, D. (1990). *Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead End Kids*. Harper Perennial.

Paley, V. (1992). *You Can't Say You Can't Play*. Harvard University Press.

Taylor, D. (1991). *Learning Denied*. Heinemann.

SCHEDULE of TOPICS and EVENTS

Date/ Meeting	Topic/Event	Resource
Jan. 27/1	Introduction to the Course	
Feb. 3/2	Individual differences/ "Reading Disability" Defined/Principles of Remediation	Text: 5, 6, 11
Feb. 10/3	Factors Related to Reading Performance (Group 1)	Text: 8, 9,10

Feb. 10/3	Factors Related to Reading Performance (Group 1)	Text: 8, 9,10
Feb. 17/4	Assessment Issues/Terms and Concepts (Group 2)	Text: 7
Feb. 24/5	Overview of Reading and Reading Instruction; Discussion and Work Session	Text: 1-4
March 3/6	TEST CRITIQUES	IMC
March 10/7	TEST CRITIQUES	IMC
March 17/8	Word Recognition (Development) (Group 3) BOOK CRITIQUE: *Phonics They Use*	Text: 12
March 24/9	Word Recognition (Problems)/Dyslexia (Group 4) BOOK CRITIQUE: *Learning Denied*	Text: 13
March 31	SPRING RECESS	
* /10	Vocabulary/"Prior" Knowledge (Group 5) BOOK CRITIQUE: *Cultural Literacy*	Text: 14
* /11	Beyond Sentences/Comprehension (Group 6) BOOK CRITIQUE: *You Can't Say You Can't Play*	Text: 15
* /12	Learning through Reading/Study Techniques/Rate (Group 7) BOOK CRITIQUE: *Whole Language*	Text: 16, 17
* /13	Lifelong Reading . . . or Not (Group 8) BOOK CRITIQUE: *Teenage Wasteland*	Text: 18
* /14	Review and Summary	The Text
May 12*	Notice that between April 7 and May 12 there are 6 meeting dates but only 5 "scheduled" meetings. We will use the unscheduled slot for a guest presentation, an additional topic, or ... To be decided.	

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read and be prepared to participate in class discussion of all readings as assigned. (10%)

2. WRITTEN COMMENTARIES. Prepare a written commentary for the text chapters related to topics listed in the SCHEDULE. Commentaries are due at the meeting for which the topic/chapter(s) are scheduled. (15%)

   Do not attempt to summarize the authors' presentation. Rather, address questions such as these:
   (1) Which specific ideas stand out for me? Why were those the ones that impressed me?
   (2) What does the author remind me of? That is, how do my personal stories tie in with the author's? Do the author's stories fit in with my own experiences and beliefs?
   (3) What do the authors make me wonder about? What's unclear? What seems workable and what seems off the wall?
   (4) How does this particular piece tie in with what I've been reading and what we've been talking about in class?
   (5) Do I need to know more about any issues that are raised? Or am I ready now to make an informed decision about how I can proceed?

   We'll talk more about all this in class.

3. LEAD A DISCUSSION. Join a small group to be responsible for leading the discussion of the topic(s)/chapter(s) scheduled for Meetings 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13. In other words: When you pick ONE of the available dates, you become a member of a small group (everybody who picked that particular topic). The group is responsible for leading the discussion of the topic(s). Details will be discussed in class. (15%)

4. ASSESSMENT CRITIQUE. Describe and critique a specific assessment device, technique or approach; discuss its strengths and weaknesses in terms of your own (or anticipated) teaching situation. Oral presentations are due at Meeting 6 OR Meeting 7. (20%)

5. BOOK CRITIQUE. Your choice of ONE book from List A and ONE book from List B makes you a member of two small groups that will be responsible for focusing and leading a discussion of each book. In preparation for the class discussion of each book, the group should (a) devise ways to share the essential content by identifying critical issues that are addressed or raised by the author(s), and (b) prepare a "resource package"—which may be made available to each class member the week before the scheduled discussion—that will facilitate the discussion. Details will be discussed in class. (20%)

6. WRITTEN PROJECT. Write an essay in which you address a topic or issue that is important to you as a practicing (or prospective) remedial teacher. Your essay may take the form of a "position paper" where you clarify your personal stance regarding some aspect of remedial teaching or remedial program development. OR it may take the form of a "journal article" where you share an insight or examine a concern. OR . . . it may take a direction negotiated with the instructor. Papers are due no later than Meeting 13. (20%)

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Ekwall, E. E. & Shanker, J. L. (1993). *Diagnosis and remediation of the disabled reader,* 6th ed. New York: Macmillan. Popular book . . . don't know why.

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The American Reading Forum's Goals:

The American Reading forum declares the following to be its reason for existence and the guidelines for its activities:

- To provide a true forum for reading education where new research can be generated, research in progress can be refined, completed research can be reported, and reported research can be evaluated.
- To provide for the translation of reading research, theory, and philosophical deliberations into sound practice, but with no research, discussion, or contemplation to be discarded because its implementation is not immediately apparent.
- To conduct a conference at which newly trained scholars and scholars in training can get to know and get assistance from established and distinguished scholars in the field, through a mutual exchange of ideas.
- To provide a yearbook through which scholars of all levels can share viewpoints, resources, and expertise.
- To ensure that in the field of reading no idea is too bold or new to be given a hearing, and none too old to be given reconsideration.

The American Reading Forum's Meeting:

To achieve its goals, ARF sponsors a meeting each year during early December. The program consists of the common conference session formats (e.g., paper sessions, major addresses, and symposia), as well as alternative formats to those generally employed by organizations in the field of reading. To enhance the opportunity for participants' interaction, the American Reading Forum encourages a variety of formats for its sessions. A "Topical Issues Forum," a "Continuous Dialogue Session," and "Mentorships Sessions" are a few of the formats that ARF considers as ways to allow issues and topics to be discussed in depth by those who attend the annual meeting.

Membership Form

Annual membership in the American Reading Forum begins in December of the year in which your application is received. All memberships include the annual YEARBOOK, which is received the following December.

Name: ______________________________
First Initial Last

Address: ______________________________

____

City/State or Province/Code: ______________________________

Phone: Office (____) __________ Home (____) __________

Type of Membership: Individual ($35) _____ Student ($17.50) _____

Husband/Wife ($60) _____

Faculty Endorsement of Student Membership Application:

I verify that this applicant is a full-time student.

______________________________ ______________________________
Faculty Member's Signature Name of Institution

Mail this application with your check, made payable to ARF, to

AMERICAN READING FORUM
Education Department
North Georgia College
Dahlonega, GA 30549

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